

SERIES OF INDIAN HISTORY No. 11.

DIVIDE & CONQUER.

OR

THE MYSTERIOUS FOUNDATION

OF THE

BRITISH EMPIRE

IN INDIA

BY

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THE ENGLISH IN INDIA—SYSTEM OF TERRITORIAL ACQUISITION.

“And Ahab came into his house, heavy and displeased, because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. But Jezebel his wife came to him and said unto him, why is thy spirit so sad that thou eatest no bread? And he said unto her, Because I spoke unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, give me thy vineyard for money; or else if it please thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it; and he answered I will not give thee my vineyard.

And Jezebel, his wife, said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry; I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite.

And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria; behold he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?—I. Kings XXI. 4. 19.

The appearance of the Europeans in India, if the inhabitants could have had the Bible put into their hand

and been told that that was the law which these strangers professed to follow, must have been a curious spectacle. They who professed to believe the commands that they should not steal, covet their neighbour's goods, kill, or injure—must have been seen with wonder to be the most covetous, murderous, and tyrannical of men. But if the natives could have read the declaration of Christ—"By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another,"—the wonder must have been tenfold; for never did men exhibit such an intensity of hatred, jealousy, and vengeance towards each other. Portuguese, Dutch, French, English, and Danes, coming together, or one after the other, fell on each other's forts, factories, and ships with the most vindictive fury. They attacked each other at sea or at land; they propagated the most infamous characters of each other wherever they came, in order to supersede each other in the good graces of the people who had valuable trading stations, or were in possession of gold or pearls, nutmegs or cinnamon, coffee, or cotton cloth. They loved one another to that degree that they were ready to join the natives any where in the most murderous attempts to massacre and drive away each other. What must have seemed most extraordinary of all, was the English expelling with rigour those of their own countrymen who ventured there without the sanction of the particular trading company which claimed a monopoly of Indian commerce. The rancour and pertinacity with which Englishmen attacked and expelled Englishmen, was even more violent than that which they shewed to foreigners. The history of foreigners, especially of the Dutch, Port

gues, English, and French, in the East, in which every species of cruelty and bad faith have been exhibited, is one of the most melancholy and humiliating nature. Those of the English and French did not cease till the very last peace. At every outbreak of war between these nations in Europe, the forts and factories and islands which had been again and again seized upon, and again and again restored by treaties of peace in India, became immediately the scene of fresh aggressions, bickerings, and enormities. The hate which burnt in Europe was felt hotly, even to that distance; and men of another climate, who had no real interest in the question, and to whom Europe was but the name of a distant region which had for generations sent out swarms of powerful oppressors, were called upon to spill their blood and waste their resources in these strange deeds of their tyrants. It is to be hoped that the bulk of this evil is now passed. In the peninsula of India, to which I am intending in the following chapters to confine my attention, the French now retain only the factories of Chandernagore, Caricall, Mahee, and Pondicharee; the Portuguese Goa, Daman, and Diu; the Dutch, Serampore and Tranquebar; while the English power had triumphed over the bulk of the continent—over the vast regions of Bengal, Madras, Bombay, the Decan and the Carnatic—over a surface of upwards of 500 thousand square miles, and a population of nearly a 100 millions of people! These states are either directly and avowedly in British possession, or are as entirely so under the name of allies. We may well, therefore, leave the history of the squabbles and contests of the European Christians with each other for this enormous power,

disgraceful as that history is to the name of Christianity—to inquire how we, whose ascendancy has so wonderfully prevailed there, have gained this dominion and how we have used it.

When Europe sought your subject—realms to gain,
 And stretched her giant sceptre o'er the main,
 Taught her proud barks the winding way to shape,
 And braved the stormy spirit of the Cape ;
 Children of Brama ! then was mercy nigh,
 To wash the stain of blood's eternal dye ?
 Did Peace descend to triumph and to save,
 When free-born Britons crossed the Indian wave ?
 Ah no !—to more than Rome's ambition true,
 The muse of Freedom gave it not to you !
 She the bold route of Europe's guilt began,
 And, in the march of nations, led the van !

Pleasures of Hope.

We are here to witness a new scene of conquest. The Indian natives were too powerful and populous to permit the Europeans to march at once into the heart of their territories, as they had done into south America, to massacre the people, or to subject them to insatiable slavery and death. The old inhabitants of the empire, the Hindoos, were indeed, in general, a comparatively feeble and gentle race, but there were numerous and striking exceptions ; the mountaineers were, as mountaineers in other countries, of a hard, active, and martial character. The Marhattas, the Bonilas, the Seiks, the Rajputs, and others, were fierce and formidable tribes. But besides this, the ruling princes of the country, whether Mogals or

Hindus. had for centuries maintained their sway by the same power by which they had gained it, that of arms. They could bring into the field immense bodies of troops, which though found eventually unable to compete with European power and discipline, were too formidable to be rashly attacked, and have cost oceans of blood and treasure finally to reduce them to subjection. Moreover, the odium which the Spaniards and Portuguese had everywhere excited by their unceremonious atrocities, may be supposed to have had their effect on the English, who are a reflecting people; and it is to be hoped also that the progress of sound policy and of Christian knowledge, however slow, may be taken into the account in some degree. They went out too under different circumstances—not as mere adventurers, but as sober traders, aiming at establishing a permanent and enriching commerce with these countries; and if Christianity, if the laws of Justice and of humanity were to be violated, it must be under a guise of policy, and a form of law.

We shall not enter into a minute notice of the earliest proceedings of the English in India, because for upwards of a century from the formation of their first trading association, those proceedings are comparatively insignificant.

During that period Bombay had been ceded as part of a marriage—portion by the Portuguese to Charles II.; factories had been established at Surat, Madras, Masulipatam, Visigapatam, Calcutta, and other places; but it was not till the different chartered companies were consolidated into one grand company in 1708,

styled "The United Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies," that the English affairs in the east assumed an imposing aspect. From that period the East India Company commenced that career of steady grasping at dominion over the Indian territories, which has never been relaxed for a moment, but, while it has for ever worn the grave air of moderation, and has assumed the language of right, has gone on adding field to field and house to house—swallowing up state after state, and prince after prince, till it has finally found itself the sovereign of this vast and splendid empire, as it would fain persuade itself and the world, by the clearest claims, and the most undoubted justice. By the laws and principles of modern policy, it may be so; but by the eternal principles of Christianity, there never was a more thorough repetition of the hankering after Naboths' vineyards, of the "slaying and taking possession" exhibited to the world. It is true that, as the panegyrists of our Indian policy contend, it may be the design of Providence that the swarming millions of India should be placed under our care, that they may enjoy the blessings of English rule, and of English knowledge: but Providence had no need that we should violate all his most righteous injunctions to enable him to bring about his design. Providence, the Scriptures tell us, intended that Jacob should supersede Esau in the heritage of Israel: but Providence had no need of the deception which Rebecca and Jacob practised,—had no need of the mess of pottage and the kid-skins, to enable Him to effect his object. We are much too ready to run the wilful career of our own lusts and passions, and lay the charge at the door

of Providence. It is true that English dominion is, or will become, far better to the Hindoos than that of the cruel and exacting Moguls; but who made us the judge and the ruler over these people?

If the real object of our policy and exertions in India has been the achievement of wealth and powers, as it undoubtedly has, it is pitiful and hypocritical to endeavour to clothe it with the pretence of working the will of Providence, and seeking the good of the natives. We shall soon see which object has been most zealously and undeviatingly pursued, and by what means. If our desires have been, not to enrich and aggrandise ourselves, but to benefit the people and rescue them from the tyranny of bad rulers, heaven knows what wide realms are yet open to our benevolent exertion; what despots there are to pull down; what miserable millions to relieve from their oppressions;—and when we behold Englishmen leveling their vengeance against such tyrants, and visiting such unhappy people with their protective power, where neither gold nor precious merchandise are to be won at the same time, we may safely give the amplest credence and the profoundest admiration to their claims of disinterested philanthropy. If they present themselves as the champions of freedom, and the apostles of social amelioration, we shall soon have opportunities of asking how far they have maintained these characters.

Mr. Auber, in his "History of the British power in India," has quoted largely from letters of the Board of Directors of the Company, passages to show how sincerely the representatives of the East India Company

at home have desired to arrest encroachment on the rights of the natives ; to avoid oppressive exaction ; to resist the spirit of military and political aggression. They have from year to year proclaimed their wishes for the comfort of the people ; they have disclaimed all lust of territorial acquisition ; have declared that they were a mercantile, rather than a political body ; and have rebuked the thirst of conquest in their agents, and endeavoured to restrain the avidity of extortion in them. Seen in Mr. Auber's pages, the Directors present themselves as a body of grave and honorable merchants, full of the most admirable spirit of moderation, integrity, and benevolence ; and we may give them the utmost credit for sincerity in their professions and desires. But unfortunately, we all know what human nature is. Unfortunately the power, the wealth, and the patronage brought home to them by the very violation of their own wishes and maxims were of such an overwhelming and seducing nature, that it was in vain to resist them. Nay, in such colours does the modern philosophy of conquest and diplomacy disguise the worst transactions between one state and another, that it is not for plain men very readily to penetrate to the naked enormity beneath. When all the world was applauding the success of Indian affairs,—the extension of territory, the ability of their governors, the valour of their troops ; and when they felt the flattering growth of their greatness, it required qualities far higher than mere mercantile probity and good intentions, to enable them to strip away the false glitter of their official transactions, and sternly assure themselves of the unholliness of their nature. We may therefore concede

to the Directors of the East India Company, and to their governors and officers in general, the very best intentions, knowing as we do, the force of influences such as we have already alluded to, and the force also of modern diplomatic and military education, by which a policy and practices of the most dismal character become gradually to be regarded not merely unexceptionable, but highly honorable. We may allow all this, and yet pronounce the mode by which the East India Company has possessed itself of Hindustan, as the most revolting and unchristian that can possibly be conceived. The most masterly policy, regarded independent of its *morale*, and a valour more than Roman have been exhibited by our Governors-generals and armies on the plains of Hindustan: *but if there ever was one system more Machiavelian—more appropriative of the show of justice where the basest injustice was attempted—more cold, cruel, haughty and unrelenting than another,—it is the system by which the government of the different states of India has been wrested from the hands of their respective princes and collected into the grasp of the British power.* Incalculable gainers as we have been by this system, it is impossible to review it without feelings of the most poignant shame and the highest indignation. Whenever we talk to other nations of British faith and integrity, they may well point to India in derisive scorn. The system which, for more than a century, was steadily at work to strip the native princes of their dominions, and that too under the most sacred pleas of right and expediency, is a system of torture more exquisite

than regal or spiritual tyranny ever before discovered; such as the world has nothing similar to show.

Spite of the repeated instructions sent out by the Court of Directors to their servants in India, to avoid territorial exquisions, and to cultivate only honest and honorable commerce; there is evidence that from the earliest period the desire of conquest was entertained, and was, spite of better desires, always to welcome to be abundant. In the instructions forwarded in 1689, the Directors expounded themselves in the following words: "The increase of our revenue is the subject of our care, as much as our trade:—'t is that must maintain our force when twenty accidets may interrupt our trade;—'t is that must make us a nation in India. Without that, we are but as a great number of interlopers, united by his Majesty's Royal charter; fit only to trade where no body of power thinks fit only to prevent us: and upon this account it is that the wise Dutch, in all their general advices which we have seen, write ten paragraphs concerning their government, their civil and military policy, warfare and the increase of their revenue, for one paragraph they write concerning trade" Mill's History of British INDIA, i 74. BRUCE iii. 78.

Spite of all pretences to the contrary—spite of all advices and exhortations from the government at home of a more unambitious character, this was the spirit that never ceased to actuate the Company, and was so clearly felt to be it, that its highest servants, in the face of more peaceful injunctions, and in the face of the Act of Parliament strictly prohibiting territo-

rial extensions, went on perpetually to add conquest to conquest, under the show of necessity or civil treaty; and *they who offended most against the letter of the law, gratified most entirely the spirit of the company and the nation.* Who have been looked upon as so eminently the benefactors and honourers of the nation by Indian acquisition as Lord Clive, Warren Hastings, and the Marquess of Wellesley? It is for the determined and successful opposition to the ostensible principles and annually reiterated advices of the Company, that that very Company has heaped wealth and distinctions upon these and other persons, and for which it has just recently voted an additional pension to the latter nobleman.

What then is this system of torture by which the possessions of the Indian princes have been wrung from them? It is this—the skillful application of the process by which cunning men create debtors, and then force them at once to submit to their most exorbitant demands. From the moment that the English felt that they had the power in India to “divide and conquer,” they adopted the plan of doing it rather by plausible manoeuvres than by a bold avowal of their designs, and a more honest plea of the right of conquest—the ancient doctrine of the strong, which they began to perceive was not quite so much in esteem as formerly. Had they said at once, these Mahomedan princes are arbitrary, cruel, and perfidious—we will depose them, and assume the Government ourselves—we pretend to no other authority for our act than our ability to do it, and no other excuse for our conduct than our determination to redress the

evils of the people : that would have been a candid
 behaviour. It would have been so far in accordance
 with the ancient doctrine of nations that little would
 have been thought of it ; and though as Christians we
 could not have applauded the " doing evil that good
 might come of it," yet had the promised benefit to more
 than eighty millions of people followed, that glorious
 penance would have gone far in the most scrupulous
 mind to have justified the crime of usurpation. But
 the mischief has been, that while the exactions and
 extortions on the people have been continued, and
 in many cases exaggerated, the means of usurpation
 have been those glozing and hypocritical arts, which
 are more dangerous from their subtlety than naked
 violence, and more detestable because wearing the
 face, and using the language, of friendship and
 justice. A fatal friendship, indeed, has that of the
 English been to all those princes that were allured by
 it. It has pulled them every one from their thrones,
 or has left them there the contemptible puppets of a
 power that works its arbitrary will through them.
 But friendship or enmity, the result has been even-
 tually the same to them. If they resisted alliance
 with the encroaching English, they were soon charged
 with evil intentions, fallen upon, and conquered ; if
 they acquiesced in the proffered alliance, they soon be-
 came ensnared in those webs of diplomacy from which
 they never escaped, without the loss of all honour
 and hereditary dominion—of every thing, indeed, but
 the lot of prisoners where they had been kings. The
 first step in the English friendship with the native
 princes, has generally been to assist them against
 their neighbours ; with troops, or to locate

troops with them to protect them from aggression. For these services such enormous recompense was stipulated for, that the unwary princes, entrapped by their fears of their native foes rather than of their pretended friends, soon found that they were utterly unable to discharge them. Dreadful exactions were made on their subjects, but in vain. Whole provinces, or the revenues of them, were soon obliged to be made over to their grasping friends; but they did not suffice for their demands. In order to pay them their debts or their interest, the princes were obliged to borrow large sums at an extravagant rate. These sums were eagerly advanced by the English in their private and individual capacities, and securities again taken on lands or revenues. At every step the unhappy princes became more and more embarrassed, and as the embarrassment increased, the claims of the company became proportionably pressing. In the technical phraseology of money lenders, "the screw was then turned," till there was no longer any enduring it. The unfortunate princes felt themselves, instead of being relieved by their artful friends, actually introduced by them into

Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell; hope never comes

That comes to all; but torture without and

Still urges.

To escape it, there became no alternative but to throw themselves entirely upon the mercy of their inexorable creditors, or to break out into armed resistance. In the one case they found themselves speedi-

ly stripped of every vestige of their power—their revenues and management of their territories given over to these creditors, which still never were enough to liquidate their monstrous and growing demands; so that the next proposition was that they should entirely cede their territories, and become pensioners on their usurpers. In the other case, they were at once declared perfidious and swindling,—no faith was to be kept with them,—they were assailed by the irresistible arms of their oppressors, and inevitably destroyed or deposed.

If they sought aid from another state, that became a fortunate plea to attack that state too; and the English were not contented to chastise the state thus aiding its ancient neighbour, it was deemed quite sufficient ground to seize and subjugate it also. There was no province that was for a moment safe from this most convenient system of policy, which feared public opinion sufficiently to seek arguments to make a case before it, but resolved still to seize, by hook or by crook, all that it coveted. It did not suffice that a province merely refused an alliance, if the proper time was deemed to be arrived for its seizure—some plea of danger or suspicion was set up against it. It was called good policy not to wait for attack, but to charge it with hostile designs, though not a hostile indication was given—it was assailed with all the forces in the empire. Those princes that were once subjected to the British power or the British *friendship*, were set up or pulled down just as it suited their pleasure. If necessary, the most odious stigmas were fixed on them

to get rid of them—they were declared weak, dissolute, or illegitimate. If a prince or princess was suspected of having wealth, some villainous scheme was hatched to plunder him or her of it. For more than a century this shocking system was in operation, every day growing more daring in its action, and more wide in its extent. Power both gave security and augmented audacity—for every British subject who was not belonging to the Company, and therefore interested in its operations, was rigidly excluded from the country, and none could therefore complain of the evil deeds that were there done under the sun. It is almost incredible that so abominable an influence could be for a century exercised over a great realm, by British subjects, many of whom were in all other respects worthy and most honourable men; and, what is more, that it could be sanctioned by the British parliament, and admired by the British nation. But we have yet the proofs to adduce, and unfortunately they are only too abundant and conclusive. Let us see them.

We will for the present pass the operations of Clive in the Carnatic at once to destroy the French influence there, and to set up Mahomet Ali, a creature of the English. We shall anon see the result of that: we will observe in the first place the manner of obtaining Bengal, as it became the head of the English empire in India, and the Centre of all future transactions.

In 1756 Suraja Dowla, the Subedar of Bengal, demanded an officer belonging to him who, according to the custom amongst the colonists there, had been

refuge at Calcutta. The English refused to give him up. The Subedar attacked and took the place. One hundred and Forty six of the English fell into the Conqueror's hands, and were shut up for the night in the celebrated *Black Hole*, whence only twenty three were taken out alive in the morning. It may be said in vindication of the Subahdar, that the act of immuring these unfortunate people in this horrible den was not his, but that of the guards to whom they were entrusted for the night, and who put them there as in a place of the greatest security; and it may be added, not to the credit of the English, *that this very black hole was the English prison, where they were in the habit of confining their prisoners.* As Mr. Mills very justly asks "What had they to do with a black hole? Had no black-hole existed, as none ought to exist anywhere, least of all in the sultry and unwholesome climate of Bengal, those who perished in Black hole of Calcutta would have experienced a different fate." On the news of the capture of Calcutta arriving at Madras, a body of troops was dispatched under admiral Watson and Colonel Clive, for its recovery; which was soon effected, and Hoogly, a considerable city about twenty three miles further up the river, was also attacked and reduced. A treaty was now entered into with Suraja Dowla, the Subahdar, which was not of long continuance; for, lest the Subahdar, who was not at bottom friendly to the English, as he had in reality no cause, should form an alliance with the French at Chandernagore, they resolved to depose him! This bold and unwarrantable scheme of deposing a prince in his own undoubted territories, and

that by mere strangers and traders on the coast, is the beginning of that extraordinary and unexampled assumption which has also always marked the conduct of the English in India. Scarcely had they entered into the treaty with this Subahdar than they resolved to depose him because he would protect the French, who were also permitted to hold a factory in his territory as well as they. This audacious scheme was Clive's. Admiral Watson, on the contrary, declared it an extraordinary thing to depose a man they had so lately made a solemn treaty with. But Clive, as he afterwards avowed, when examined before the House of Commons, declared that "they must now go further; they could not stop there. *Having established themselves by force and not by consent of the Nabob, he would endeavour to drive them out again.*"

This is the robber's doctrine;—having committed one outrage, a second, or a series of outrages must be committed, to prevent punishment, and secure the booty. But having once entertained the idea of pulling the Subahdar from his throne, they did not scruple to add treason and rebellion to the crime of invading the rights of the sovereign. They began by debauching his own officers. They found out one Meer Jaffier Khan, a man of known traitorous mind, who had been pay master-general under the former Subahdar, and yet retained great power in the army. This wretch, on condition of being placed on the throne, agreed to betray his master, and seduce as many of the influential of his officers as possible. The terms of this diabolical confederacy between this

base traitor and the baser *Christian English*, as they stand in the first parliamentary report on Indian affairs, and as related by Orme in his *History of India* (ii, 153), and by Mills (ii, 110), are very instructive.

The English had got an idea which wonderfully sharpened their desire to depose Suraja Dowla, that he had an enormous treasure. The Committee of the Council of Calcutta really believed, says Mr. Orme, the wealth of Suraja Dowla much greater than it possibly could be, even if the whole life of the late Nawab Ali Wardi had not been spent in defending his dominions against the invasions of ruinous enemies; and even if Suraja Dowla had reigned many, instead of one year. They resolved, accordingly, not to be sparing in their commands; and the situation of Meer Jaffir, and the manners and customs of the country, made him ready to promise whatever they desired. In the name of compensation for losses by the capture of Calcutta, Rs. 10,000,000 were promised to the English Company; Rs. 5,000,000 to English inhabitants; Rs. 2,000,000 to the Indians, and Rs. 700,000 to the Armenian merchants. These sums were specified in the formal treaty. Besides this, the Committee resolved to ask Rs. 25,00,000 for the squadron, and the same amount for the army. "When this was settled," Says Lord Clive, "Mr. Becher, (a member) suggested to the Committee, that he thought that Committee, who managed the great machine of government, was entitled to some consideration, as well as the army and navy." Such a proposition in such an assembly could not fail to appear

eminently reasonable. It met with a suitable approbation. Mr. Becher informs us, that the sums received were Rs. 280,000 by Mr. Drake the governor; 280,000 by Colonel Clive; and 240,000 each by himself, Mr. Wats, and Mr. Major Kilpatrick, the inferior members of the committee. The terms obtained by favour of the company were, that all the French factories and effects should be given up; that the French should be for ever excluded from Bengal; that the territory surrounding Calcutta to the distance of 600 yards beyond the Marhatta ditch, and all the land lying South of Calcutta as far as Culpee, should be granted them on Zemindary tenure, the Company paying the rent in the same manner as the other Zemindars.

Thus did these Englishmen bargain with a traitor to betray his prince and country,—the traitor, for the bribe of being himself made prince, not merely sell his master, but give two millions three hundred and ninety eight thousand pounds sterling (according to Orme 27,50,000 £) with valuable privileges and property of the state,—while these dealers in treason and rebellion pocketed each, from 240 to 280 thousands pounds sterling! A more infamous transaction is not on record.

To carry this wicked conspiracy into effect, the English took the field against their victim Suraja Dawla; and Meer Jaffar, the traitor in the midst of the engagement moved off, and went over to the English with his troops—

thus determining the fate of a great kingdom, and of 30,000,000 of people, with the loss of twenty Europeans killed and wounded, of 16 spoys killed, and only 36 wounded. The unfortunate prince was soon afterwards seized and assassinated by the son of this traitor Meer Jaffar. The vices and inefficiency of this bad man soon compelled the English to pull him down from the throne into which they had so criminally raised him. They then set up in his stead his son-in-law, Meer Kasim. This man for a time served their purpose by the activity with which he raised money to pay their claims upon him. He resorted to every species of cruelty and injustice to extort the necessary funds from his unfortunate subjects. But about three years, nearly the same period as their former puppet—nawab had reigned, sufficed to weary them of him. He was rigorous enough to raise money to pay them, but he was not cool enough, when that was done, to humour every scheme of rapacity which they dictated to him. They complained of his not allowing their goods to pass duty-free through his territories; he therefore abolished all duties, and thus laid open the trade to everybody. This enraged them, and they determined to depose him. Meer Kasim, however, was not so readily dismissed as Meer Jaffar had been. He resisted vigorously; massacred such of their troops as fell into his hands, and fleeing into Oudh, brought them into war with its Nawab. What is most remarkable, they again set up old Meer Jaffar, whom they had before deposed for his crimes and his imbecility. But probably, from their experience

of Meer Kasim, they now preferred an easy tool to one with more self will. In their treaty with him they made a claim upon him for ten lakhs of rupees ; which demand speedily grew to twenty, thirty, forty, and finally to fifty three lakhs of rupees. All delicacy was laid aside in soliciting the payment, and one-half of it was soon extorted from him. The Subahdar, in fact, was now become the merest puppet in their hands. They were the real lords of Bengal, and in direct receipt of more than half the revenues. Within less than ten years from the disgraceful bargain with the traitor Meer Jaffar, they had made Bengal their own, though they still hesitated to avow themselves as its sovereigns ; they had got possession of Benaras ; they had acquired that power over the Nowab of Oudh, in consequence of the successful war brought upon him by his alliance with the deposed Nawab Meer Kasim, that would at any time make them entirely his masters ; the Mughal himself was ready and anxious to obtain their friendship ; they were, in short, become the far greatest power in India.

Here then is an opening instance of the means by which we acquired our territories in India ; and the language of Lord Clive, when he returned thither as governor of Bengal in 1765, may shew what other scenes were likely to ensue. "We have at last arrived at that critical period which I have long foreseen ; I mean that period which renders it necessary for us to determine whether we can or shall take the whole to ourselves. Jaffar Ali Khan is dead. His natural son is a minor ; but I know not whether

he is yet declared successor. Shujah Daula is beat from his dominions. We are in possession of it; and it is scarcely hyperbole to say—to-morrow the whole Mughal empire is in our power. The inhabitants of the country, we know by long experience, have no attachment to any obligation. Their forces are neither disciplined, commanded, nor payed like ours. Can it then be doubtful that a large army of Europeans will effectually preserve us sovereigns?"

The scene of aggression and aggrandizement here indicated, soon grew so wide and busy, that it would far exceed the whole space of this volume to trace even rapidly its great outlines. The great Mogul, the territories of Oude and Arcot, Mysore, Travancore, Benares, Tanjore, the Mahrattas, the whole peninsula in fact, speedily felt the effect of these views, in diplomatic or military subjection. We can point out no fortunate exception, and must therefore content ourselves with briefly touching upon some of the more prominent cases.

The first thing that deserves attention, is the treatment of the Mogul himself. This is the statement of it by the French historian: "The Mogul having been driven out of Delhi by the Rattans, by whom his son had been set up in his room, was wandering from one province to another in search of a place of refuge in his own territories, and requesting succour from his own vassals, but without success. Abandoned by his subjects, betrayed by his allies, without support and without an army, he was allured by the power of

the English, and implored their protection. They promised to conduct him to Delhi, and re-establish him on his throne ; but they insisted that he should previously cede to them the absolute sovereignty over Bengal. This cession was made by an authentic act, attended by all the formalities usually practised throughout the Mogul empire. The English, possessed of this title, which was to give a kind of legitimacy to their usurpation, at least in the eyes of the vulgar, soon forgot the promises they had made.

They gave the Mogul to understand, that particular circumstances would not suffer them to be concerned in such an enterprise ; but some better opportunity was to be hoped for ; and to make up for his losses, they assigned him a pension of six millions of Rupees, (262,500 £), with the revenue of Alahabad, and Sha Ichabad or Dehli, upon which that unfortunate prince was reduced to subsist himself, in one of the principal towns of Benaras, where he had taken up his residence." Raynal.

Hastings, in fact, made it a reason for depriving him again even of this pension, that he had sought the aid of the Marhattas, to do that which he had vainly hoped from the English—to restore him to his throne. This is Mill's relation of this fact, founded on the fifth Parliamentary report—"Upon receiving from him the grant of the dunnies, or the receipt and management of the revenues of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, it was agreed that, as a royal share of these revenues, twenty six lakhs of rupees should be annually paid to him by the company. His having excepted of the assistance of the Marhattas to place

him on the throne of his ancestors, was now made use of as a reason for telling him, that the tribute of these provinces should be paid to him no more. Of the honour, or the discredit, however, of this transaction, the principal share belongs not to the governor, but to the directors themselves; who, in their letter to Bengal, of the 11th of November 1768, had said, "If the emperor flings himself into the hands of the Marhattas, or any other power, we are disengaged from him, and it may open a fair opportunity of withholding the 26 Lakhs we now pay him." Upon the whole, indeed, of the measure dealt out to this unhappy sovereign,—depriving him of the territories of Corah and Alahabad; depriving him of the tribute which was due to him from these provinces of his which they possessed—the Directors bestowed unqualified approbation; and though they condemned the use which had been made of their troops in subduing the country of the Rohilas, they frankly declare, "We, upon the maturest deliberation confirm the treaty of Banares." "Thus," adds Mills, "they had plundered the unhappy emperor of twenty six lakhs per annum, and the two provinces of Corah and Alahabad, which they had sold to the Vizir for 50 lakhs of rupees, on the plea that he had forfeited them by his alliance with the Marhattas;" as though he was not free, if one party would not assist him to regain his rights, to seek that assistance from another.

Passing over the crooked policy of the English, in seizing upon the isles of Salsette and Bassein, near Bombay, and treating for them afterwards, and all

the perfidies of the war for the restoration of Ragabah, the Peshwa of the Marhattas, the fate of the Nawab of Arcot, one of their earliest allies, is deserving of particular notice, as strikingly exemplifying their policy. They began by obtaining a grant of land in 1750, surrounding Madras. They then were only too happy to assist the Nawab against the French. For these Military aids, in which Olive distinguished himself, the English took good care to stipulate for their usually monstrous payments. Moham-mad Ali, the Nawab, soon found that he was unable to satisfy the demands of his allies. They urged upon him the maintenance of large bodies of troops for the defence of his territories against these French and other enemies. This threw him still more inextricably into debt, and therefore more inextricably into their power. He became an unresisting tool in their hands. In his name the most savage exactions were practiced on his subjects. The whole revenues of his kingdom, however, proved totally inadequate to the perpetually accumulating demands upon them. He borrowed money where he could, and at whatever interest, of the English themselves. When this interest could not be paid, he made over to them, under the name of *tuncause* the revenues of some portion of his domains. These assignments directly decreasing his resources, only raised the demands of his other creditors more violently, and the fleecing of his subjects became more and more dreadful. In this situation, he began to cast his eyes on the neighboring states, and to incite his allies, by the assertion of various claims

upon them, to join him in falling upon them, and thus to give him an opportunity of paying them. This exactly suited their views. It gave them a prospect of money, and of conquest too, under the plausible colour of assisting their ally in urging his just claims. They first joined him in falling on the Raja of Tonjore, whom the Nawab claimed as a tributary, and indebted to him in a large amount of revenue. The Raja was soon reduced to submission, and agreed to pay 30 Lakhs and 50 thousand rupees, and to aid the Nawab in all his wars. Scarcely, however, was this treaty signed, than they repented of it; thought they had not got enough; hoped the Raja would not be exact to a day in his payment, in which case they would fall on him again for breach of treaty. It so happened;—they rushed out of their camp, seized on part of vellum, and the districts of Coiladdy and elanged, to the retention of which the poor Raja was obliged to submit.

This affair being so fortunately adjusted, the Nawab called on his willing allies to attack the Marwars. They too, he said, owed him money; and money was what the English were always in want of. They readily assented, though they declared that they believed the Nawab to have no real claim on the Marwars whatever. But then, they said, the Nawab has made them his enemies, and it is necessary for his security that they should be reduced. They did not pretend it was just—but then, it was politic. The particulars of this war are barbarous and disgraceful to the English. The Nawab thirsted for the destruction of these states: he and his

Christian allies soon reduced Ramnadaporam, the Capital of the great Marwar, seized the Polygar, a minor of twelve years old, his mother, and the Duan; they came suddenly upon the Polygar of the lesser Marwar while he was trusting to a treaty just made, and killed him; and pursued the inhabitants of the country with severities that can only be represented by the language of one of the English officers addressed to the council. Speaking of the animosity of the people against them, and their attacking the baggage, he says, "I can only determine it by reprisals, which will oblige me to plunder and burn the villages; kill every man in them; and take prisoners the women and children. These are actions which the nature of this war will require.*"

Such were the unholy deeds into which the Nawab and the great scheme of acquisition of territory had led our countrymen in 1773; but this was only the beginning of these affairs. This bloody campaign ended; and large sums of money levied, the Nawab proposed *another* war, on the Raja of Tanjore! There was not the remotest plea of injury from the Raja, or breach of treaty. He had paid the enormous sum demanded of him before, by active levies on his subjects, and by mortgaging lands and jewels; but the Nawab had now made him a very dangerous enemy—he *might* ally himself with Hyder Ali, or the French, or some power or other—therefore it was better that he should be utterly destroyed, and his country put into the power of the Nawab! "Never!" exclaims Mr. Mills, "I suppose, was the resolution,

* Tanjore Papers. Mil.'s history

taken to make war upon lawful sovereign, with the view of reducing him entirely, that is, stripping him of his dominions, and either putting him and his family to death, or making them prisoners for life, upon a more accomodating reason! We have done the Raja great injury—we have no intention of doing him right—this is a sufficient reason for going on to his destruction.” But it was not only thought, but done; and this was the bargain. The Nawab was to advance money and all due necessaries for the war, and to pay 10,000 instead of 7,000 sepoys. The unhappy Raja was speedily defeated, and taken prisoner with his family; and his country put into the hands of his mortal enemy. There were men of honour and virtue enough amongst the Directors at home, however, to feel a proper disgust, or at least, regard for public opinion, at these unprincipled proceedings, and the Raja, through the means of Lord Paget was restored, not however without having a certain quantity of troops quartered upon him; a yearly payment of four lakhs of pagodas imposed; and being bound not to make any treaty or assist any power without the consent of the English. He was, in fact, put into the first stage of that process of subjection which would, in due time, remove from him even the shadow of independence.

Such were the measures by which the Nawab of Arcot endeavoured to relieve himself from his embarrassments with the English; but they would not all avail. Their demands grew faster than he could find means to satisfy them. Their system of action was too well devised to fail them; their victims

rarely escaped from their toils : he might help them to ruin his neighbours, but he could not escape them himself. During his life he was surrounded by a host of cormorant creditors ; his country, harassed by perpetual exactions, rapidly declined ; and the death of his son and successor, Omdut-ul-Omar, in 1801, produced one of the strangest scenes in this strange history. The Marquis Wellesley was then Governor-General, and, pursuing that sweeping course which stripped away the hypocritical mask from British power in India, threw down so many puppet princes, and displayed the English dominion in Hindustan in its gigantic nakedness. The revenues of the Carnatic had been before taken in the hands of the English, but Lord Wellesley resolved to depose the Prince ; and the manner in which this deposition was effected, was singularly despotic and unfeeling. They had come to the resolution to depose the Nowab, and only looked about for some plausible pretence. This they professed to have found in a correspondence which, by the death of Tippo Sahib, had fallen into their hands—a correspondence between Tippo and some officers of the Nawab. They alleged, that this correspondence contained injurious and even treasonable language towards the English. When, therefore, the Nawab lay on his death bed they surrounded his house with troops, and immediately that the breath had departed from him they demanded to see his will. This rude and unfeeling behaviour, so repugnant to the ideas of every people, however savage and brutal, at a moment so solemn and sacred to domestic

sorrow, was respectfully protested against—but in vain. The will they insisted upon seeing, and it accordingly was put into their hands by the son of the Nawab, now about to mount the throne himself. Finding that the son was nominated as his heir and successor by the Nawab, the Commissioners immediately announced to him the charge of treason against his father, and that the throne was thereby forfeited by the family. This charge, of course, was a matter of surprise to the family; especially when the papers said to contain the treason were produced, and they could find in them nothing but trems of fidelity and respect towards the English government. But the English had resolved that the charge should be a sufficient charge, and the young prince manfully resisting it, they then declared him to be of illegitimate birth,—a very favourite and convenient plea with them. On this they set him aside, and made a treaty with another prince, in which for a certain provision the Carnatic was made over to them for ever. The young Nawab, Ali Hussain, did not long survive this scene of indignity and arbitrary deposition—his death occurring in the spring of the following year.

Such was the English treatment of their friend the Nawab of Arcot;—the Nawab of Arcot, whose name was for years continually heard in England as the powerful ally of the British, as their coadjutor against the French, against the ambitious Hyder Ali, as their zealous and accommodating friend on all occasions. It was in vain that either the old Nawab, or the young one, whom they so summarily deposed, pleaded the faith of treaties, their own hereditary

right, or ancient friendship. Arcot had served its turn ; it had been the stalking-horse to all the aggressions on other states that they needed from it,—they had exacted all that could be exacted in the name of the Nowab from his subjects—they had squeezed the sponge dry ; and moreover the time was now come that they could with impunity throw off the stealthy crouching attitude of the tiger, the smiling meek mask of alliance, and boldly seize upon undisguised sovereign powers in India. Arcot was but one state amongst many that were now to be so treated. Benaras, Oudh, Tanjore, Surat, and others found themselves in the like case.

Benares had been a tributary of Oudh ; but in 1764, when the English commenced war against the Nabab of Oudh, the Raja of Benaras joined the English, and rendered them the most essential services. For these he was taken under the English protection. At first with so much delicacy and consideration was he treated, that a resident was not allowed, as in the case of other tributaries, to reside in his capital, lest in the words of the minute of the Governor-General in command in 1775 : “such resident might acquire an improper influence over the Raja and his country, which would in effect render him master of both ; lest it should end,” as they knew that such things as a matter of course did end, “in reducing him to the mean and depraved state of a mere Zamindar”. The council expressed its anxiety that the Raja’s independence should be in no way compromised than by the mere fact of the payment of his tribute, which, says Mills, continued to be paid with an exactness

rarely exemplified in the history of the tributary the princes of Hindustan. But unfortunately, the Raja gave some offence to the powerful Warren Hastings, and there was speedily a requisition made upon him for the maintenance of three battalions of Sepoys, estimated at five lacs of rupees. The Raja pleaded inability to pay it forthwith; but five days only were given him. This was followed by a third and fourth requisition of the same sort. Seeing how the tide was running against him, the unhappy Raja sent a private gift of two lacs of rupees to Mr. Hastings,—the pretty sum of £20,000, in the hope of regaining his favour, and stopping this ruinous course of exaction. That unprincipled man took the money, but exacted the payment of the public demand with unabated rigour, and even fined him 10,000£, for delay in payment, and ordered troops, as he had done before, to march into his country to enforce the iniquitous exaction!

The work of diplomatic robbery on the Raja now went on rapidly. "The screw was now turned" with vigour,—to use a homely but expressive phrase, the nose was held desperately to the grind-stone. No bounds were set to the pitiless fury of spoliation, for the Governor's revenge had none; and besides, there was a dreadful want of money to defray the expenses of the wars with Hyder into which the Government had plunged. "I was resolved," says Hastings, "to draw from his guilt" (his having offended Mr. Hastings—the guilt was all on the other side) "the means of relief to the company's distresses." In a word, I had determined to make him pay largely for his pardon, or to exact a severe ven-

gence for his past delinquency." (Governor General's own narrative. Second Report of select committee, 1781) What this delinquency could possibly be, unless it were not having sent Mr. Hastings a *second* present of *two lacs*, is not to be discovered; but the success of the first placebo was not such as to elicit a second. The Rajah, therefore, tried what effect he could produce upon the council at large; he sent an offer of *TWENTY LACS for the public service*. It was scornfully rejected, and a demand of *FIFTY LACS* was made! The impossibility of compliance with such extravagant demands was what was anticipated; the Governor hastened to Benaras, arrested the Raja in his own capital; set at defiance the indignation of the people at this insult. The astounded Raja made his escape, but only to find himself at war with his insatiable despoilers. In vain did he propose every means of accommodation. Nothing would now serve but his destruction. He was attacked, and compelled to fly.

Bidgegur, where, says Hastings himself, "he had left his wife, a woman of amiable character, his mother, all the other women of his family, and the survivors of the family of his father, Balwant Singh" was obliged to capitulate; and Hastings, in his fell and inextinguishable vengeance, even, says Mills, "in his letters to the commanding officer, employed expressions which implied that the plunder of these women was the due reward of the soldiers; and which suggested one of the most dreadful outrages to which, in the conception of the country, a human being could be exposed."

The fort was surrendered on express stipulation for the safety, and freedom from search, of the females; but, adds Mills, "the idea suggested by Mr. Hastings diffused itself but too perfectly amongst the soldiery; and when the princesses, with their relatives and attendants, to the number of three hundred women, besides children, withdrew from the castle, the capitulation was shamefully violated; they were plundered of their effects, and their persons otherwise rudely and disgracefully treated by the licentious people, and followers of the camp." He adds, "one is delighted for the honour of distinguished gallantry, that in no part of the appropriate business the commanding officer had any share. He leaned to generosity and the protection of the princesses from the beginning. His utmost endeavours were exerted to restrain the outrages of the camp; and he represented them with feeling to Mr. Hastings, who expressed his concurrence, etc." The only other consolation in this detestable affair is, that the soldier, in spite of Hastings, got the plunder of the Rajah, and that the Court of Directors at home censured his conduct. But these are miserable drops of satisfaction in this huge and overflowing cup of bitterness,—of misery to trusting, friendly, and innocent people; and of consequent infamy on the British name.

We must, out of the multitudes of such cases, confine ourselves to one more. The atrocities just recited had put Benares into the entire power of the English, but it had only tended to increase the

pecuniary difficulties. The soldiery had got the plunder—the expenses of the war were added to the expenses of other wars ;—some other kingdom must be plundered, for booty must be had: so Mr. Hastings continued his journey, and paid a visit to the Nabob of Oude. It is not necessary to trace the complete progress of this Nabob's friendship with the English. It was exactly like that of the other princes just spoken of. A treaty was made with him : and then, from time to time, the usual exactions of money and the maintenance of troops for his own subjection were heaped upon him. As with the Nabob of Arcot, so with him, they were ready to sanction and assist him in his most criminal views on his neighbours, to which his need of money drove him. He proposed to Mr. Hastings, in 1773, to assist him in *exterminating the Rohillas*, a people bordering on his kingdom : “ a people,” says Mills, “ whose territory was, by far, the best governed part of India: the people protected, their industry encouraged, and the country flourishing beyond all parallel.”

It was by careful neutrality, and by these acts, that the Rohillas sought to maintain their independence; and it was of such a people that Hastings, sitting at table with his tool, the Nabab of Oude, coolly heard him offer him a bribe of forty lakhs of Rupees (400,000 £.) and the payment of the troops furnished, to assist him to destroy them utterly ! There does not seem to have existed in the mind of Hastings one human feeling : a proposition which would have covered almost any other man with unspeakable horror, was

received by him as a matter of ordinary business. "Let us see", said Hastings, "we have a heavy bounded debt, at one time 125 Lakhs of Rupees. By this a saving of near one third of our military expenses would be effected during the period of such service; the forty lacs would be an ample supply to our treasury; and the Vazir (the Nabab of Oude) would be freed from a trouble-some neighbour." These are the monsters's own words; the bargain was struck, but it was agreed to be kept secret from the Council and Court of Directors. In one of Hastings's letters still extant, he tells the Nabab, "should the Rohillas be guilty of a breach of their agreement (a demand of forty lacs suddenly made upon them—for in this vile affairs everything had a ruffian character—they first demanded their money, and then murdered them) *we will thoroughly exterminate them, and settle our excellency in the country.*"* The extermination was conducted to the letter, as agreed, as far as was in their power. The Rohillas defended themselves most gallantly; but were overpowered,—and their chief, and upwards of a hundred thousand people fled to the mountains. The whole country lay at the mercy of the allies, and the British officers themselves declared that perhaps never were the rights of conquest more savagely abused. Colonel Champion, one of them, says in a letter of June 1774, published in the Report alluded to below, "the inhumanity and dishonour with which the late proprietors of this country and their families have been used, is known all

* Fifth Parliamentary Report—Appendix No. 21.

over these parts. A relation of them would swell this letter to an enormous size I could not help compassionating such unparalleled misery, and my requests to the Vazir to shew lenity were frequent, but as fruitless as even those advices which I almost hourly gave him regarding the destruction of the villages; with respect to which he always promised fair, but did not observe one of his promises, nor cease to overspread the country with flames, till three days after the fate of Haf z Rahmet was decided." The Nabab had frankly and repeatedly assured Hastings that this intention was to *exterminate* the Kohillas, and every one who bore the name of Kohilla was either butchered, or found his safety in flight and in exile. Such were the diabolical deeds into which our government drove the native princes by their enormous exactions, or encouraged them in, only in the end to enslave them the more.

Before the connexion between the English and Oude, its revenue had exceeded three millions sterling, and was levied without being accused of deteriorating the country. In the year 1779, it did not exceed one half of that sum, and in the subsequent years it fell far below it, while the rate of taxation was increased, and the country exhibited every mark of oppressive exaction.* In this year the Nabab represented to the council the wretched condition to which he was reduced by their exactions, that the children of the deceased Nabab had subsisted in a very distressed manner for two years past;

*Mills ii. 624.

that the attendants, writers, and servants, had received no pay for that period; that his father's private creditors were daily pressing him, and there was not a foot of country which could be appropriated to their payment; that the revenue was deficient fifteen lacs, (a million and a half sterling); that the country and cultivation were abandoned; the old chieftains and useful attendants of the court were forced to leave it; that the company's troops were not only useless, but caused great loss to the revenue and confusion in the country; and that the support of his household, on the meanest scale, was beyond his power.

This melancholy representation produced—what?—pity, and an endeavour to relieve the Nabab?—no, exasperation. Mr. Hastings declared that, both it and the crisis in which it was made were equally alarming. The only thing thought of was what was to be done if the money did not come in? But Mr. Hastings, on his visit to the Nabab at Lucknow, made a most lucky discovery. He found that the mother and widow of the late Nabab were living there, and possessed of immense wealth.

His rapacious mind, bound by no human feeling or moral principle, and fertile in schemes of acquisition, immediately conceived the felicitous design of setting the Nabab to strip those ladies, well known to English readers since the famous trial of Mr. Hastings, as "the Begams." It was agreed between the Nabab and Mr. Hastings, that his Highness should be relieved of the expense which

he was unable to bear, of the English troops and gentlemen ; and he, on his part, engaged to strip the Begums of both their treasure and their Jaghires (revenues of certain lands), delivering to the Governor-General the proceeds. As a plea for this most abominable transaction, in which a prince was compelled by his cruel necessities and the grinding exactions and threats of the English to pillage forcibly his near relatives, a tale of treason was hatched against these poor women. When they refused to give up their money, the chief eunuchs were put to the torture till the ladies in compassion gave way : 550 000 £, sterling were thus forced from them : the torture was still continued, in hope of extracting more ; the women of the zenana were deprived of food at various times till they were on the point of perishing for want ; and every expedient was tried that the most devilish invention could suggest, till it was found that they had really drawn the last doit from them. But what more than all moves one's indignation against this base English Inquisitor, was, that he received as his share of these spoils the sum of ten lacs, or 100.000 £ !—and that notwithstanding the law of the company against the receipt of presents ; its avowed distress for want of money ; and the poverty of the kingdom of Oude, which was thus plundered and disgraced from the very inability to pay its debts if debts such shameful exactions can be called. Hastings did not hesitate to apprise the council of what he had received, and requested their permission to retain it for himself.

Of the numerous transactions of a most wicked

character connected with these affairs ; of the repugnance of the Nabab to do the dirty work of Hastings on his relatives, the Begums ; of the haughty insolence by which his tyrant compelled him to the compact ; of the restoration of the Jaghires, but not the moneys to the Beghums ; of the misery and desolation which forced itself even upon the horny eyes of Hastings as he made his second progress through the territories of Oude, the work of his own oppressions and exactions ; of the twelve and a half millions which he added by his wars and political manœuvres to the Indian debt—we have not here room to note more than the existence of such facts, which are well-known to all the readers of Indian History, or of the trial of Warren Hastings, where every artifice of the lawyers were employed to prevent the evidence of these things being brought forward : and where a house of peers was found base or weak enough to be guided by such artifices, to refuse the most direct evidence against the most atrocious transactions in history : and thus to give sanction and security to the commission of the most dreadful crimes and cruelties in our distant colonies. Nothing could increase from this time the real power of the English over Oude though circumstances might occasion a more open avowal of it. Even during the Government of Lord Cornwallis and Sir John Shore, now Lord Teignmouth, two of the most worthy and honourable rulers that British India ever had, the miseries and exactions continued, and the well intentioned financial measures of Lord Cornwallis even tend,

ed to increase them. In 1798, a Governor, Sir John Shore, proceeded to depose the ruling Nabab as illegitimate (a plea on which the English set aside a number of Indian princes,) and elevated another in his place, and that upon evidence, says the historian, "upon which an English court of law would not have decided against him a question of a few pounds "

It was not, however, till 1799, under the Government of the Marquis Wellesley, that the hand of British power was stretched to the utmost over his devoted district. That honest and avowed usurper, who disdained the petty acts of his predecessors, but declared that the British dominion over the peninsula of India must be frankly avowed and fearlessly asserted—certainly a much better doctrine than the cowardly and hypocritical one hitherto acted upon;—that every English man who did not belong to the company must and should be expelled from that country; and that the English power and the corporate monopoly should be so strenuously and unflinchingly exerted, that foreign aggression or domestic complaint should be alike dispersed;—this straightforward Governor-General soon drove the Nabab of Oude to such desperation by the severity of his measures and exactions, that he declared his wish to abdicate. Nothing could equal the joy of the Governor-General at the prospect of this easy acquisition of this entire territory: but that joy was damped by discovering that the Nabab only wished to resign in favour of—his own son! The chagrin of the Governor-General on this discovery is not to be expressed;

and the series of operations then commenced to force the Nabab to abdicate in favour of the company; when that could not be effected, to compel him to sacrifice one half of his territories to save the rest; when that sacrifice was made, to inform him that he was to have no independent power in his remaining half—is one of the most instructive lessons in the art of diplomatic fleeing, of forcing a man out of his own by the forms of treaty but with the iron hand of irresistible power, which any despot who wishes to do a desperate deed handsomely, and in the most approved style, can desire. It was in vain that the Nabab declared his payment of exactions: his hereditary right; his readiness shewn on all occasions to aid and oblige; the force of treaties in his favour. It was in vain that he asked to what purpose should he give up one half of his dominions if he were not to have power over the other, when it was to secure this independent power that he gave up that half? What are all the arguments of right, justice, reason, or humanity, when Ahab wants the vineyard of Naboth, and the Jezebel of political and martial power tells him that she will give it him? The fate of Oude was pre-determined, along with that of various other states, by the Governor-General, and it was decided as he determined it should be.

Before we close this chapter, we will give one instance of the manner in which the territories of those who held aloof, and did not covet the fatal friendship of the English were obtained, and the most striking of these are the dominions of Hyder Ali—the kingdom of Mysore.

Hyder was a soldier of fortune. He had risen by an active and enterprising disposition from the condition of a common soldier to the head of the state. The English considered him as an ambitious, able, and therefore very dangerous person in India. There can be no doubt that he considered them the same. He was an adventurer; so were they. He had acquired a great territory by means that would not bear the strictest scrutiny; so had they; but there was this difference between them, Hyder acted according to the customs and maxims in which he had been educated, and which he saw universally practised by all the princes around him. He neither had the advantage of Christian knowledge and principle, nor pretended to them. The English on the contrary, came there as merchants; they were continually instructed by their masters at home not to commit military aggressions. They were bound by the laws of their country not to do it. They professed to be in possession of a far higher system of religion and morals than Hyder and his people had. They pretended to be the disciples of the Prince of peace. Their magnanimous creed they declared to be, "To do to others as they would wish to be done by." But neither Hyder nor any other Indian ever saw the least evidence of any such superiority of morals, or of faith, in their conduct. They were as ambitious, and far more greedy of money than the heathen that they pretended to despise for their heathenism. They ought to have set a better example—but they did not. There never was a people that grasped more convulsively at

dominion, or were less scrupulous in the means of obtaining it. They declared Hyder cruel and perfidious. He knew them to be both. This was the ground on which they stood. There were reasons why the English should avoid interfering with Hyder. There were none why he should avoid encroaching on them, for he did not profess any such grand principles of action as they did. If they were what they pretended to be, they ought to preach peace and union amongst the Indian Princes: but union was of all things in the world the very one which they most dreaded; for they were not what they pretended to be: but sought on the divisions of the natives to establish their own power. Had Hyder attacked them in their own trading districts, there could have been no reason why they should not chastise him for it. But it does not appear that he ever did attack them at all till they fell upon him, and that with the avowed intention to annihilate his power as dangerous. No, say they, but he attacked the territories of our ally the Sobahdar of Deccan, which we were bound to defend. And here it is that we touch again upon that subtle policy by which it became impossible, when they had once got a footing in the country that, having the will and the power, they should not eventually have the dominion. While professing to avoid conquest, we have seen that they went on continually making conquests. But it was always on the plea of aiding their allies. They entered knowingly into alliances on condition of defending with arms their allies, and then, when

they committed aggressions, it was for these allies. In the end the allies were themselves swallowed up, with all the additional territories thus gained. It was a system of fattening allies as we fatten oxen, till they were more worthy of being devoured. They cast their subtle threads of policy like the radiating filaments of the spider's web, till the remotest extremity of India could not be touched without startling them from their concealed centre into open day, ready to run upon the unlucky offender. It was utterly impossible, on such a system, but that offences should come, and woes to them by whom they did come.

The English were unquestionably the aggressors in the hostilities with Hyder. They entered into a treaty with Nizam Ali, the Subadar of Deccan, offensive and defensive; and the very first deed which they were to do, was to seize the fort of Bangalore, which belonged to Hyder. They had actually marched in 1767 into his territories, when Hyder found means to draw the Nizam from his alliance, and in conjunction with him fell upon him, and compelled them to fly to Trincomalee. By this unprovoked and voluntary act they found themselves involved at once in a war with a fierce and active enemy, who pursued them to the very walls of Madras; scoured their country with his cavalry; and compelled them to a dishonourable peace in 1769, by which they bound themselves to assist him too in his defensive wars! To enter voluntarily into such conditions with such a man, betrayed no great delicacy of moral feeling as to what

wars they engaged in, or no great honesty in their intentions as regarded the treaty itself. They must soon either fight with some of Hyder's numerous enemies, or break faith with him. Accordingly the very next year the Mahrattas invaded his territories ; he called earnestly on his English allies for aid, and aid they did not give. Hyder had now the justest reason to term them perfidious, and to hold them in distrust. Yet, though deeply exasperated by this treachery, he would in 1778 most willingly have renewed his alliance with them ; and the presidency of Madras acknowledged their belief that, had not the treaty of 1769 been evaded, Hyder would never have sought other allies than theirs lives.* There were the strongest reasons why they should have cultivated an amicable union with them, both to withdraw him from the French, and on account of his own great power and revenues. But they totally neglected him, or insulted him with words of mere cold courtesy ; and a new aggression upon the fortress of Mahé, a place tributary to Hyder, which they attacked in order to expel the French, and which Hyder resented on the same principle as they would resent an attack upon any tributary of their own, well warranted the declaration of Hyder, that they " were the most faithless and usurping of mankind " They were these arbitrary and impolitic deeds which brought down Hyder speedily upon them, with an army 100,000 strong ; and soon showed them Madras menaced, the Carnatic overrun, Arcot taken, and a war of such a desperate and bloody character raging

* Mill's ii 430.

around them, as they had never yet seen in India, and which might probably have expelled them thence, had not death released them in 1782 from so formidable a foe, who had been so wantonly provoked.

Tippoo Sultaun, with all his activity and cunning had not the masterly military genius of his father, — but he possessed all the fire of his resentment, and it was not to be expected that, after what had passed, there could be much interval of irritation between him and the English. They had roused Hyder as a lion is roused from his den, and he had made them feel his power. They would naturally look on his son with suspicion, and Tippoo had been taught to regard them as “the most faithless and usurping of mankind” Whatever, therefore, may be said for or against him, on the breaking out of the second war with him, the original growth of hostility between the British and the Mysorian monarchs, must be charged to the former, and in the case of the last war, there appears to have been no real breach of treaty on the part of Tippoo. He had been severely punished for any act of irritation which he might have committed against any of the British allies, by the reduction of his capital, the surrender of his sons as hostages, and the stripping away of one half of his territories to be divided amongst his enemies, each of whom had enriched himself with half a million sterling of annual revenue at his expense. Tippoo must have been nothing less than a mad man in his shattered condition, and with his past experience, to have lightly ventured on hostilities with the English. But it was charged on him that he was seeking an

alliance with the French. What then ? He had the clearest right so to do. So long as he maintained the terms of his treaty, the English had no just right to violate theirs towards him. The French were his ancient and hereditary friends. Tippoo persisted to the last that he had done nothing to warrant an attack upon him ; but Lord Mornington had adopted his notions about consolidating the British power in India, and every possible circumstance, or suspicion of a circumstance, was to be seized upon as a plea for carrying his plans into effect. It was enough that a fear *might be* entertained of Tippoo's designs. It became good policy to get the start ; and when once that for estalling system in hostilities, that outstripping in the race of mischiefs, is adopted, there is no possible violence nor enormity which may not be undertaken, or defended upon it. Tippoo was assailed by the British, and their ally the Nizam ; and though he again and again protested his innocence, again and again asked for peace, he was pursued to his capital, and killed bravely defending it. His territories were divided amongst those who had divided the former half of them in like manner, the English, the Nizam, and the Mahrattas, with a little state appropriated to a puppet-*raja*. Thus did the English shew what they would do to those who dared to decline their protection. Thus did they pursue, beat down, and destroy with all their mighty resources an independent prince, whose whole revenue, after their first partition of his realm, did not much exceed a million sterling. We have heard a vast deal in Europe of the partition of Poland, but how much

better was the forcible dismemberment of Mysore? The injury of this dismemberment of his kingdom is, however, not the least heaped upon Tippoo. On his name have been heaped all the odious crimes, that make us hate the worst of tyrants. Cruelty, perfidy, low cunning, and all kinds of baseness, make up the idea of Tippoo which we have derived from those who profited by his destruction. But what say the most candid historians? " That the accounts which we have received from our countrymen, who dreaded and feared him, are marked with exaggeration, is proved by this circumstance, that his servants adhered to him with a fidelity which those of few princes in any age or country have displayed. Of his cruelty we have heard the more, because our own countrymen were amongst the victims of it. But it is to be observed, that unless in certain instances the proof of which can be regarded as better than doubtful, their sufferings, however intense, were only the sufferings of a very rigorous imprisonment, of which, considering the manner in which it is lavished upon them by their own laws, Englishmen ought not to be very forward to complain. At that very time, in the dungeons of Madras or Calcutta, it is probable that unhappy sufferers were enduring calamities for debts of 100*l.*, not less atrocious than those which Tippoo, a prince born and educated in a barbarous country, and ruling over a barbarous people, inflicted upon imprisoned enemies, part of a nation, who, by the evils they had brought upon him, exasperated him almost to frenzy, and whom he regarded as the enemies both of God and man

Besides, there is among the papers relating to the intercourse of Tippoo with the French, a remarkable proof of his humanity, which, when these papers are ransacked for matters to criminate him, ought not to be suppressed. In a draught of conditions on which he desired to form a treaty with them, these are the words of a distinct article:—‘I demand that male and female prisoners, as well English as Portuguese, who shall be taken by the republican troops, or by mine, shall be treated with humanity; and, with regard to their persons, that they shall (their property becoming the right of the allies) be transported, at our joint expense, out of India, to places far distant from the territories of the allies.’

“ Another feature in the character of Tippoo was his religion, with a sense of which his mind was most deeply impressed. He spent a considerable part of every day in prayer. He gave to his kingdom a particular religious title, *Cudadad*, or God-given; and he lived under a peculiarly strong and operative conviction of the superintendence of a Divine Providence. To one of his French advisers, who urged him zealously to obtain the support of the Mahrattas, he replied, I rely solely on Providence, expecting that I shall be alone and unsupported; but God and my courage will accomplish everything. He had the discernment to perceive, what is so generally hid from the eyes of rulers in a more enlightened state of society, that it is the prosperity of those who labour with their hands which constitutes the principle and cause of the prosperity of

states. He therefore made it his business to protect them against the intermediate orders of the community, by whom it is so difficult to prevent them from being oppressed. His country was, accordingly, at least during the first and better part of his reign, the best cultivated, and his population the most flourishing, in India: while under the English and their paggants, the population of Carnatic and Oude, hastening to the state of deserts, was the most wretched upon the face of the earth; and even Bengal itself, under the operations of laws ill adopted to their circumstances, was suffering almost all the evils which the worst of Governments could inflict.... For an eastern Prince he was full of knowledge. His mind was active, acute, and ingenious. But in the value which he set upon objects, whether as means, or as an end, he was almost perpetually deceived. Besides, a conviction appears to have been rooted in his mind that the English had now formed a resolution to deprive him of his kingdom, and that it was useless to negotiate, because no submission to which he could reconcile his mind, would restrain them in the gratification of their ambitious designs."—*Mills*.

Tippoo was right. The great design of the English, from their first secure footing in India, was to establish their control over the whole Peninsula. The French created them the most serious alarm in the progress of their career towards this object; and any native state which shewed more than ordinary energy, excited a similar feeling. For this purpose all the might of British

power and policy was exerted to expel these European rivals, and to crush such more active states. The administration of the Marquis Wellesley was the exhibition of this system full blown. For this, all the campaigns against Holkar and Scindia; the wars from north to south, and from east to west of India, were undertaken; and blood was made to flow, and debts to accumulate to a degree most monstrous. Yet the admiration of this system of policy in England has shewn how little human life and human welfare, even to this day, weigh in the scale against dominion and avarice. We hear nothing of the horrors and violence we have perpetrated, from the first invasion of Bengal, to those of Nepaul and Burmah; we have only eulogies on the empire achieved:—"See what a splendid empire we have won"! True,—there is no objection to the empire, if we could only forget the means by which it has been created. But amid all this subtle and crooked policy—this creeping into power under the colour of allies—this extortion and plunder of princes, under the name of protection—this forcible subjection and expatriation of others, we look in vain for the generous policy of the Christian merchant and the Christian statesman.* The moderation of a Teign-

*Sir Thomas Roe was sent in 1614, on an embassy to the Great Mogul. In his letters to the Company he strongly advised them against the expensive ambition of acquiring territory. He tells them, "It is greater than trade can bear; for to maintain a garrison will cut out your profit: a war and

mouth, a Cornwallis, or a Bentinck, is deemed mere pusillanimity. Those divine maxims of peace and union which Christianity would disseminate amongst the natives of the countries that we visit, are condemned as the very obstacles to the growth of our power. When we exclaim,

traffic are incompatible. The Portuguese, notwithstanding their many rich residences, or beggared by keeping of soldiers: and yet their garrisons are but mean. They never made advantage of the Indies since they defended them;—observe this well. It has also been the error of the Dutch, who seek plantations here by the sword. They turn a wonderful stock; they prowl in all places; they possess some of the best: yet their dead pays consume all the gain. Let this be received as a rule, that if you will profit, seek it at sea, and in quiet trade: for without controversy, it is an error to affect garrisons, and land wars in India.”

Had Sir Thomas been inspired, could he have been a truer Prophet? The East India Company, after fighting and conquering in India for two centuries, have found themselves, at the dissolution of their charter, nearly fifty millions in debt; while their trade with China, a country in which they did not possess a foot of land, had become the richest commerce in the world! The article of tea alone returning between three and four millions annually, and was their sole preventive against bankruptcy. Can, indeed, any colonial acquisition be pointed out that is not a loss to the parent state?

"what might not Englishmen have done in India had they endeavoured to pacify and enlighten, instead of to exact and destroy"? We are answered by a smile, which informs us that these are but romantic notions,—that the only wisdom is to get rich !

Treatment of the natives

Rich in the gems of India's gaudy zone,
And plunder, piled from Kingdoms not their own,
Degenerate trade ! thy minions could despise,
The heart-born anguish of a thousand cries ;
Could lock, with impious hands their teaming store,
While famished nations died along the shore ;
Could mock the groans of fellow-men ; and bear
The curse of kingdoms peopled with despair ;
Could stamp disgrace on man's polluted name,
And barter, with their gold, eternal shame.

Pleasures of Hope.

We have in some degree caught a glimpse of the subject of this chapter in the course of the last. The treatment of the native chiefs in our pursuit of territorial possession is in part the treatment of the natives, but it is unhappily a very small part. The scene of exaction, rapacity, and plunder which India became in our hands, and that upon the whole body of the population, forms one of the most disgraceful portions of human history ; and while the temptations to it existed in full force, defied all the powers of legislation, or the moral influence of public opinion to check the evil. In vain the East India Company itself, in vain the British Parliament legislated on the subject ; in

vain did the Court of Directors from year to year, send out the most earnest remonstrances to their servants, —the allurements were too splendid, the opportunities too seducing, the example too general, the security too great, to permit any one to attend to either law, remonstrance, or the voice of humanity. The fame of India, as a vast region of inexhaustible wealth, had resounded through the world for ages; the most astonishing notions of it floated through Europe, before the sea-track to it was discovered; and when that was done, the marvellous fortune made there by bold men, as it were in a single day, and by a single stroke of policy, seemed more than to warrant any previous belief. Men in power received their presents of ten, twenty, or a hundred thousand pounds. Clive, for the assistance of the British army, was presented with the magnificent gift of a jaghire, or hereditary revenue of 30,000 £. a year! On another occasion he received his 28,000 £., and his fellow-rulers each a similar sum. Hastings received his twenty and his hundred thousand pounds, as familiarly as a gold snuff-box or a piece of plate would be given as a public testimony of respect for popular services, in England. Every man, according to his station and his influence, found the like golden harvest. Who could avoid being inflamed with the thirst for Indian service? —who avoid the most exaggerated anticipations of fortune? It was a land, and a vast land, hedged about with laws of exclusion to all except such as went through the doors of the Company. There were there no interlopers, —no curious, because obstructed obser-

vers. There was but one object in going thither, and one interest when there. It was a soil made sacred, or rather, doomed, to the exclusive plunder of a privileged number. The highest officers in the government had the strongest motives to corruption, and therefore could by no possibility attempt to check the same corruption in those below them. When the power and influence of the Company became considerably extended over Bengal, Behar, Orissa, Oude, the Carnatic, and Bombay, the harvest of presents grew into a most affluent one. Nothing was to be expected, no chance of justice, of attention, of alleviation from the most abominable oppression, but through the medium of presents, and those of such amounts as fairly astonish European ears. Every man, in every department, whether civil, military, or mercantile, was in the certain receipt of splendid presents. When the government had found it necessary to forbid the receipt of presents by any individual in the service, not only for themselves, but for the Company, the highest officers set the laws at defiance, and the mischief was made more secret, but not less existent.

But besides presents and official incomes, there were the farming of the revenues, and domestic trade, which opened up boundless sources of profit. The revenues were received in each district by Zemindars from the ryots or husbandmen and handed, after a fixed deduction, to the chief office of the revenue. But between these Zemindars and the ryots were amils, or other inferior officers, who farmed the revenues in each lesser district or village; that is, contracted with the

Zemindars for the revenues at a certain sum, and took the trouble of exacting them from the ryots, who paid a rate fixed by law or ancient custom, and could not be turned out of their lands while such rate was regularly paid. Wherever the English obtained a claim over the revenues of a prince, which we have seen they speedily did, they soon became the zemindars, or their agents, the aumils, or other middlemen between them and the ryots. Anciently, the ryots paid one tenth of their produce, for all their taxes were paid in kind, but in time the rate grew to more than half. When the English power became more fixed and open, and it was found that under the native zemindars the exactions of the revenues did not at all satisfy their demands, they took on themselves the whole business of collecting these revenues. This, as we shall see, on the evidence of the Company's own officers, became a dreadful system to the people. The Mahomedan exactions had been generally regarded more considerate than those of the native Hindu chiefs; but the grinding pressure of the English system brought on the unfortunate ryot the most unexampled misery. Of this, however, anon. It only requires here to be pointed out as one of the various sources of enormous profits and jobbing which made India so irresistibly attractive to Englishmen.

The private trade was an other grand source of revenue. The public trade, that is, the transit of goods to and from Europe, was the peculiar monopoly of the Company: but all coasting trade—trade to and between the isles, and in the interior of India

became a monopoly of the higher servants of Company, who were at once engaged in the Company's concerns and their own. The monopoly of salt, opium, betel, and other commodities became a mine of wealth. The Company's servants could fix the price at whatever rate they pleased, and thus enhance it to the unfortunate people so as to occasion them the most intense distress. Fortunes were made in a day by this monopoly, and without the advance of a single shilling. The very Governor-General himself engaged in this private trade; and contracts were given to favourites on such terms, that two or three fortunes were made out of them before they reached the merchant. In one case that came out on the trial of Warren Hastings, a contract for opium had been given to Mr. Sullivan, though he was going into quite a different part of India, and on public business; this, of course, he sold again, to Mr. Benn, for 40,000 £; and Mr. Benn immediately sold it again for 60,000 £, clearing 20,000 £ by the mere passing of the contract from one hand to the other; and the purchaser then declared that he made a large sum by it.

All these things put together, made India the theatre of sure and splendid fortune to the adventurer, and of sore and abject misery to the native. We have only to look about us in any part of England, but especially in the metropolis, and within fifty miles round it, to see what streams of wealth have flowed into this country from India. What thousands of splendid mansions and estates are lying in view, which, when the traveller inquires their history, have

been purchased by the gold of India. We are told that those days of magical accumulation of wealth are over ; that this great fountain of affluence is drained comparatively dry : that fortunes are not now readily made in India ; yet the Company, though they have lost their monopoly of trade, and their territories are laid open to the free observation of their countrymen, are in possession of the Government with a revenue of twenty millions. But all this time, what has been doing with and for the natives. We shall see that anon ; yet it may here be asked, What *could* be doing ? For what did men go to India ? For what did they endure its oppressive and often fatal climate ? Was it from philanthropical or personal motives ? Did they seek the good of the Indians or their own ? The latter, assuredly : and it was not to be expected that the majority of men should be so high-minded or disinterested as to seek the good of others at the expense of their own. The temptations to visit India were powerful, but not the less powerful were the motives to hasten away at the very earliest possible period. It was not to be expected from human nature that the natives could be much thought of what has been done for them by the devoted few, we shall recognise with delight ; at present we must revert to the evil influences of nearly two hundred years.

Amongst the first to claim our attention, are those doings in high places which have excited so strongly the cupidity of thousands, and especially those dazzling presents which became the direct cause of the most violent exactions on the people, for out

of them had all these things to be drawn. The Company could, indeed, with a very bad grace, condemn bribery in its officers, for it has always been accused of this evil practice at home in order to obtain its exclusive privileges from government; and so early as 1693, it appeared from parliamentary inquiry, that its annual expenditure under the head of gifts to men in power previous to the Revolution, seldom exceeded 1,200 £. but from that period to that year it had grown to nearly 90,000 £, annually. The Duke of Leeds was impeached for a bribe of 5,000 £, and 10,000 £. were even said to be traced to the king.*

Besides this, whenever any rival company appeared in the field, Government was tempted with the loans of enormous sums, at the lowest interest. Like fruits were to be expected in India, and were not long wanting. We cannot trace this subject to its own vast extent—it would require volumes—we can only offer a few striking examples:—

None can be more remarkable than the following list, which, besides sums that we may suppose it to have been in the power of the receivers to conceal, and of the amount of which it is not easy to form a conjecture were detected and disclosed by the Committee of the House of Commons in 1773.

The rupees are valued according to the rate of exchange of the Company's Bills at the different periods. *Account of such sums as have been improved or acknowledged before the Committees to have been distributed by the Prince and other natives of Bengal, from the year*

* Macpherson's Annals, ii. 652,662.

1757, to the year 1766, both inclusive ; distinguishing the principal times of the said distributions, and specifying the sums received by each person respectively :—

Resolution in favour of Meer Jaffer—1757.

	Rupees	£.
Mr. Drake (Governor) ...	2,80,000	31,500
Col. Clive, as Second in the Select Committee ...	} 280,000	
Ditto, as Commander-in- Chief ...		
Ditto, as private donation ...	200,000	
	1,600,000	
<hr/>		
Mr. Watts as a Member of the Committee }	2,080,000	234,000
Ditto, as a private donation	240,000	
	800,000	
<hr/>		
Major Kilpatrick ...	1,040,000	117,000
Ditto, as a private donation ...	240,000	27,000
Mr. Manimghan ...	300,000	33,750
Mr. Becher ...	240,000	27,000
Six Members of Council, one lac to each ...	240,000	27,000
Mr. Walsh ...	600,000	68,000
Mr. Scrafton ...	500,000	56,250
Mr. Lushington ...	200,000	22,500
Captain Grant ...	50,000	5,625
Stipulation, to the Navy and Army ...	100,000	11,250
	600,000	
<hr/>		
		1,261,075

Memorandum—the sum of two lacs to Lord Clive, as a Commander-in-Chief, must be deducted

from this account, it being included in the donation to the army.

22,500

1,238,575

Resolution in favour of Causim in 1760.

Mr. Sumner	...	28,000
Mr. Holwell	...	270,000
Mr. M'Guire	...	180,000
Mr. Smyth	...	130,300
Major Yorke	...	134,000
General Caillaud	...	200,000
Mr. Vansittart, 1762, received seven lacs, but the two lacs to Gen. Caillaud are included; so that only five lacs must be accounted for here	500,000	58333
Mr. M'Guire 5,000 gold morhs	75 000	8750

200,269

Resolution in favour of Jaffier in 1763.

Stipulation to the army	...	2500,000	291666
Ditto to the Navy	...	1250,000	145833

437,499

Major Munro, in 1764 received from Bulwant Singh	10,000
Ditto from the Nabab	3000
The officer belonging to Major Munro's family	

from ditto	...	3000
The army from the mer-	...	
chants at Benares	...	400,000 46,666

Nudjeemul Dowla's Accession 1765.

Mr. Spencer	...	200,000	23333
Messrs. Pleydell Burdett,			
and Grey, one lac each	...	300,000	35000
Mr. Johnstone	...	237,000	27650
Mr. Leycester	...	112,500	13125
Mr. Senior	...	172,500	20125
Mr. Middleton	...	122,500	14291
Mr. Gideon Johnstone	...	500,000	5833
			<hr/>
			139,357

General Carnac received
from Balwant Singh
in 1765.

	...	80,000	9333
Ditto from the king	...	200,000	23333
Lord Olive received from			
the Begum in 1766	...	500,000	58,333
			<hr/>
			90999

Restitution—Jaffier, 1757.

East India Company	..	1,200,000
Europeans	...	600,000
Natives	...	250,000
Armenians	...	100,000
		<hr/>
		2150,000

Causim. 1760.		
East India Company	...	62500
Jaffier. 1763.		
East India Company	...	375,000
Europeans, Natives etc.	...	600,000
		<hr/>
		975,000

Peace with Suja Dowla.

East India Company	...	5,000,000	583,333
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Total of Presents, £2169665. Restitution, etc.,
 £3770833. Total amount, exclusive of Lord Clive's
 Joghire, £5940498.

These are pretty sums to have fallen into the pockets of the English, chiefly *douceurs*, in ten years. Let the account be carried on for all India at a similar rate for a century, and what a sum! Lord Clive's jaghire alone was worth 30,000 £ per annum. And, besides this, it appears from the above documents that he also pocketed in these transactions 292,333 £. No wonder at the enormous fortunes rapidly made; at the enormous debts piled on the wretched nabobs, and the dreadful exactions on the still more wretched people. No man could more experimentally than Clive thus address the directors at home, as he did in 1765: "Upon my arrival, I am sorry to say, I found your affairs in a condition so nearly desperate as would have alarmed any set of men whose sense of honour and duty to their employers had not been estranged by the too eager pursuit of their own immediate advantages. The sudden, and among many, the unwarrantable acquisition of riches (who was so entitled to say this?) had introduced luxury

in every shape, and in its most pernicious excess. These two enormous evils went hand in hand together through the whole presidency, infecting almost every member of every department. Every inferior seemed to have grasped at wealth, that he might be enabled to assume that spirit of profusion which was now the only distinction between him and his superiors. Thus all distinction ceased, and every rank became, in a manner, upon an equality. Nor was this the end of the mischief; for a contest of such a nature amongst our servants necessarily destroyed all proportion between their wants and the honest means of satisfying them. In a country where money is plenty, where fear is the principle of Government, and where your arms are ever victorious, it is no wonder that the lust of riches should readily embrace the proffered means of its gratification, or that the instruments of your power should avail themselves of their authority, and proceed even to extortion in those cases where simple corruption could not keep pace with their rapacity. Examples of this sort, set by superiors, could not fail being followed, in a proportionate degree, by inferiors. The evil was contagious, and spread among the civil and military, down to the writer, the ensign, and the free merchant."—Clive's Letter to the Directors, Third Report of Parliamentary Committee, 1772.

The directors replied to this very letter, lamenting their conviction of its literal truth.—“We have the strongest sense of the deplorable state to which our affairs were on the point of being reduced, from the corruption and rapacity of our servants, and

the universal depravity of manners throughout the settlements. The general relaxation of all discipline and obedience, both military and civil, was hastily tending to a dissolution of all Government. Our letter to the Select Committee expresses our sentiments of what has been obtained by way of donations; and to that we must add, that we think the vast fortunes acquired in the inland trade have been obtained by a scene of the most tyrannic and oppressive conduct that was ever known in any age or country !”

But however the directors at home might lament, they were too far off to put an end to this “scene of the most tyrannic and oppressive conduct that was ever known in any age or country.” This very same grave and eloquent preacher on this oppression and corruption, Clive, was the first to set the example of contempt of the Directors’ orders, and commission of those evil practices. The directors had sent out fresh covenants to be entered into by all their servants, both civil and military, binding them not to receive presents, nor to engage in inland trade; but it was found that the governor had not so much as brought the new covenants under the consideration of the council. The receipt of presents, and the inland trade by the Company’s servants went on with increased activity. When at length these covenants were forwarded to the different factories and garrisons, General Carnac, and every body else signed them. General Carnac however delayed his signing of them till he had time to obtain a present of two lacs of rupees (upwards of 20,000 £) from the

reduced and impoverished Emperor. Clive appointed a committee to inquire into these matters, which brought to light strange scenes of rapacity, and of "threats to extort gifts." But what did Clive? He himself entered largely into private trade and into a vast monopoly of salt, an article of the most urgent necessity to the people; and this on the avowed ground of wishing some gentlemen whom he had brought out to make a fortune. His committee sanctioned the private trade in salt, betel-nut, and tobacco, out of which nearly all the abuses and miseries he complained of had grown, only confining it to the *superior servants* of the Company: and he himself, when the orders of the Directors were laid before him in council, carelessly turned them aside, saying, the Directors, when they wrote them could not know what changes had taken place in India, Nor they did not know that he and his council were now partners in the salt trade, and realizing a profit, including interest, of upwards of fifty per cent! Perhaps Clive thought he had done a great service when he had attempted to lessen the number of harpies by cutting off the trading of the juniors and thus turning the tide of gain more completely into his own pockets and those of his fellows of the council. It must have been a very provoking sight to one with a development of acquisitiveness so ample as his own, to witness what Verelst, in his "View of Bengal", describes as then existing. "At this time many black merchants found it expedient to purchase the name of any young writer in the Company's service by loans of money, and under this sanction harassed and oppressed the natives. So plentiful a supply was derived

from this source, that many young writers were enabled to spend 1500*l.* and 2000*l.* per annum, were clothed in fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." What were the miseries and insolent oppressions under which the millions of Bengal were made to groan by such practices, and by the lawless violence with which the revenues were collected about that period by the English, may be sufficiently indicated by the following passages. Mr. Hastings, in a letter to the President Vansittart, dated Bauglepores April 25th, 1762, says,— "I beg to lay before you a grievance which loudly calls for redress, and will, unless duly attended to, render ineffectual any endeavour to create a firm and lasting harmony between the Nabobs and the Company: I mean the oppressions committed under the sanction of the English name, and through the want of spirit to oppose them. The evil, I am well assured, is not confined to our dependents alone, but is practised all over the country, by people falsely assuming the habit of our sepoys, or calling themselves our gomastaks. On such occasions, the great power of the English intimidates the people from making any resistance; so, on the other hand, the indolence of the Bengalees, or the difficulty of gaining access to those who might do them justice, prevents our having knowledge of the oppressions. I have been surprised to meet with several English flags flying in places which I have passed; and on the river I do not believe I passed a boat without one. By whatever title they have been assumed, I am sure their frequency can boast no good to the Nabab's revenues, the quiet of the country, or the honour of

our nation. A party of sepoys, who were on the march before us, afforded sufficient proofs of the rapacious and insolent spirit of these people when they are left to their own discretion. Many complaints against them were made to us on the road; and most of the petty towns and serais were deserted at our approach, and the shops shut up, from the apprehension of the same treatment from us."

Mr. Vansittart endeavoured zealously to put a stop to such abominable practices; but what could he do? The very members of the council were deriving vast emoluments from this state of things, and audaciously denied its existence. Under such sanction, every inferior plunderer set at defiance the orders of the president and the authority of the officers appointed to prevent the commission of such oppressions on the natives. The native collectors of the revenue, when they attempted to levy, under the express sanction of the governor, the usual duties on the English, were not only repelled by them, but seized and punished as enemies of the Company and violators of its privileges. The native judges and magistrates were resisted in the discharge of their duties; and even their functions usurped. Everything was in confusion, and many of the zemindars and other collectors refused to be answerable for the revenues. Even the Nabab's own officers were refused the liberty to make purchases on his account. One of them, of high connexions and influence, was seized for having purchased from the Nabab some saltpetre; the trade in which they claimed as belonging exclusively to them. He was put in irons

and sent to Calcutta, where some of the council voted for having him publicly whipped, others desired that his ears might be cut off, and it was all that the president could effect to get him sent back to his own master to be punished. In Mr. Vansittart's own narrative, is given a letter from one officer to the Nabab, complaining that though he was furnished with instructions to send away Europeans who were found committing disorders to Calcutta, notwithstanding any pretence they shall make for so doing; he had used persuasion, and conciliated, and found them of no avail. That he had then striven by gentle means to stop their violences; upon which he was threatened that if he interfered with them or their servants, they would treat him in such a manner as should cause him to repent. That all their servants had boasted publicly, that this was what would be done to him did he presume to meddle. He adds, " Now sir, I am to inform you what I have obstructed them in. *This place (Backerunge) was of great trade formerly, but now brought to nothing by the following practices.* A gentleman sends a gomastah here to buy or sell. He immediately looks upon himself as sufficient to force every inhabitant either to buy his goods, or to force them to sell him theirs; and on refusal, or non-capacity, a flogging or confinement immediately ensues. This is not sufficient even when willing; but a second force is made use of, which is, to engross the different branches of trade to themselves, and not to suffer any persons to buy or sell the articles they trade in. They compel the people to buy or sell at just what rate they

please, and my interfering occasions an immediate complaint. These, and many other oppressions which are daily practised, are the reasons that this place is growing destitute of inhabitants....Before, justice was given in the public cutcheree, but now every gomastah is become a judge; they even pass sentence on the zemindars themselves; and draw money from them for pretended injuries."

Such was the state of the country in 1762, as witnessed by Mr. Hastings, and such it continued till Clive's Government, — Clive, who so forcibly described it to the Directors; and what did Clive do? He aggravated it, enriched himself enormously by the very system, and so left it. Such it continued till Mr. Hastings, — this Mr. Hastings, who so feelingly had written his views and abhorrence of it to the President Vansittart, came into supreme power, and what did the wise and benevolent Mr. Hastings? He became the Aaron's-rod of gift-takers; the prince of exactors, and the most unrelenting oppressor of the natives that ever visited India, or perhaps any other country. In the meantime this system of rapacity and extortion had reduced the people to the most deplorable condition of poverty and wretchedness imaginable. The monopoly of trade, and the violent abduction of all their produce in the shape of taxes, dispirited them to the most extreme degree, and brought on the country those famines and diseases for which that period is so celebrated. In 1770 occurred that dreadful famine, which has throughout Europe excited so much horror of the English. They have been accused of having directly created it;

by buying up all the rice, and refusing to sell any of it except at the most exorbitant price. The author of the "Short History of the English Transactions in the East Indies," thus boldly states the fact. Speaking of the monopoly just alluded to, of salt, betel-nut, and tobacco, he says, "Money in this current came but by drops. It could not quench the thirst of those who waited in India to receive it. An expedient, such as it was, remained to quicken it. The natives could live with little salt, but could not want food. Some of the agents saw themselves well situated for collecting the rice into stores; they did so. They knew that the gentoos would rather die than violate the principles of their religion by eating flesh. The alternative would therefore be between giving *what they had*, or *dying*! The inhabitants sunk. They that cultivated the land, and saw the harvest at the disposal of others, planted in doubt; scarcity ensued. Then the monopoly was easier managed,—sickness ensued. In some districts, the languid living left the bodies of their numerous dead unburied."—P. 145.

Many and ingenious have been the attempts to remove this awful approbrium from our national character. It has been contended that famines are, or were of frequent occurrence in India;—that the natives had no providence; and that to charge the English with the miserable consequences of this famine is unreasonable, because it was what they could neither foresee nor prevent. Of the drought in the previous autumn there is no doubt; but there is unhappily as little, that the regular rapacity of the

English had reduced the natives to that condition of poverty, apathy, and despair, in which the slightest derangement of season must superinduce famine;—that they were grown callous to the sufferings of their victims, and were as alive to the gain by the rising price through the scarcity, as they were in all other cases. Their object was sudden wealth, and they cared not, in fact, whether the natives lived or died, so that that object was effected. This is the relation of the Abbé Raynal, a foreign historian, and the light in which this event was beheld by foreign nations.

“It was by a drought in 1769, at the season when the rains are expected, that there was a failure of the great harvest of 1769, and the less harvest of 1770. It is true that the rice on the higher grounds did not suffer greatly by this disturbance of the seasons, but there was far from a sufficient quantity for the nourishment of all the inhabitants of the country; add to which the English, who were engaged beforehand to take proper care of their subsistence, as well as of the sepoy's belonging to them, did not fail to keep locked up in their magazines a part of the grain, though the harvest was insufficient This scourge did not fail to make itself felt throughout Bengal. Rice, which is commonly sold for one'sol ($\frac{1}{2}$ d) for three pounds, was gradually raised so high as four or even six sols (3d) for one pound; neither, indeed, was there any to be found, except in such places where the Europeans had taken care to collect it for their own use.”

"The unhappy Indians were perishing every day by thousands under this want of sustenance, without any means of help and without any revenue. They were to be seen in their villages; along the public ways; in the midst of our European colonies,—pale, meagre, emaciated, fainting, consumed by famine—some stretched on the ground in expectation of dying; others scarce able to drag themselves on to seek any nourishment, and throwing themselves at the feet of the Europeans, entreating them to take them in as their slaves.

"To this description, which makes humanity shudder, let us add other objects, equally shocking. Let imagination enlarge upon them, if possible. Let us represent to ourselves, infants deserted, some expiring on the breasts of their mothers; everywhere, the dying and the dead mingled together: on all sides, the groans of sorrow and the tears of despair; and we shall then have some faint idea of the horrible spectacle which Bengal presented for the space of six weeks.

"During this whole time, the Ganges was covered with carcases; the fields and high ways were choked up with them; infectious vapours filled the air, and diseases multiplied; and one evil succeeding another, it appeared not improbable that the plague would carry off the total population of that unfortunate kingdom. It appears, by calculations pretty generally acknowledged, that the famine carried off a fourth part, that is to say—*about three millions*! what is still more remarkable, is, that such a multitude of human creatures, amidst this terrible distress, remained in absolute inactivity.

All the Europeans, especially the English, were possessed of magazines. These were not touched. Private houses were so too. No revolt, no massacre, not the least violence prevailed. The unhappy Indians, resigned to despair, confined themselves to the request of succours they did not obtain; and peacefully awaited the relief of death.

“ Let us now represent to ourselves any part of Europe afflicted with a similar calamity. What disorder! what fury! what atrocious acts! what crimes would ensue! How should we have seen amongst us Europeans, some contending for their food, dagger in hand, some pursuing, some flying, and without remorse massacring one another! How should we have seen men at last turn their rage on themselves, tearing and devouring their own limbs; and, in the blindness of despair, trampling under foot all authority, as well as every sentiment of nature and reason!

“ Had it been the fate of the English to have had the like events to dread on the part of the people of Bengal, perhaps the famine would have been less general and less destructive. For, setting aside, as perhaps we ought, every charge of monopoly, no one will undertake to defend them against the reproach of negligence and insensibility. And in what a crisis have they merited that reproach? In the very instant of time in which the life or death of several millions of their fellow-creatures was in their power. One would think that in such alternative, the very love of humankind, that sentiment innate in all hearts, might have inspired them with resources.”
—i. 460.4.

TREATMENT OF THE NATIVES.

Continued.

"If," says the same historian, in whose language we concluded the last chapter, "to this picture of public oppressions we were to add that of private extortions, we should find the agents of the Company almost everywhere exacting their tribute with extreme rigour, and raising contributions with the utmost cruelty. We should see them carrying a kind of inquisition into every family, and sitting in judgment on every fortune; robbing indiscriminately the artizan and the labourer; imputing it often to a man, as a crime, that he is not sufficiently rich, and punishing him accordingly. We should view them selling their favour and their credit, as well to oppress the innocent as to oppress the guilty. We should find, in consequence of these irregularities, despair seizing every heart, and an universal dejection getting the better of every mind, and uniting to put a stop to the progress and activity of commerce, agriculture, and population." This, which is the language of a foreigner, was also the language of the Directors at the same period, addressed to their servants in India. They complained that their "orders had been disregarded; that oppression pervaded the whole country; that youths had been suffered with impunity to exercise sovereign jurisdiction over the natives, and to acquire rapid fortunes by monopoliz-

ing commerce." They ask "whether there be a thing which had not been made a monopoly of? Whether the natives are not more than ever oppressed and wretched?" They were just then appointing Mr. Hastings their first Governor-General, and expressed a hope that he would "set an example of temperance, economy, and application." Unfortunately Mr. Hastings set an example of a very different kind. It was almost immediately after his appointment to his high station that he entered into that infamous bargain with the Nabab of Oude for the extermination of the Rohillas; and during his Government scarcely a year passed without the most serious charges being preferred against him to the supreme council, of which he himself was the head, of his reception of presents and annuities contrary to the express injunctions of the Company, and for the purpose of corrupt appointments. In 1775 he was charged with the receipt of 15,000 rupees, as a bribe for the appointment of the Duan of Burdwan, or manager of the revenues; in 1776, of receiving an annual salary from the Phousdar of Hoogly of 30,000 rupees for a similar cause. About the same time it came out too, that in 1772, that is, immediately on entering the Governorship, he received from the Munny Begum a present of one lac and a half of rupees, for appointing her the guardian and superintendent of the affairs of the Nabob of Bengal, a minor; and the same sum had been received by Mr. Middleton, his agent.

The council felt itself bound to receive evidence on these charges. The Manarajah Nand Coomax,

who had been appointed to various important Offices by Mr. Hartinge himself came forward, and accused the Governor of acquitting Mahmud Raza Khan, the Naib Diwan of Bengal, and Rajah Shitab Roy the Naib Diwan of Behar, of vast embezzlements in their accounts, and also offered proof of the bribe of upwards of three and a half lakhs from Muny Begam and Rajah Gourdash. What answer did he make to these charges? He refused to enter into them; but immediately commenced a prosecution of Nund Coomar, on a charge of conspiracy; which failing, he had him tried on a charge of forgery, said to be committed five years before. On this he was convicted by a Jury of Englishmen, and hanged, though the crime was not capital by the laws of his country. This was a circumstance that cast the foulest suspicion upon him. It was said that a man standing in the position and peculiar circumstances of the Governor, accused of the high crimes of bribery and corruption, would, had he been innocent, have used every exertion to have saved the life of an accuser, had he been prosecuted by others, instead of himself hastening him out of the way; which must leave the irresistible conviction in the public mind of his own guilt. But on the celebrated trial of Mr. Hastings, this was exactly the mode in which every accusation was met. When the most celebrated men of the time had united to reiterate these and other charges; when he stood before the House of Peers, impeached by the Commons instead of standing forward as a man conscious of his innocence, and glad of the opportunity to clear his name from such foul taint, every technical obstruction which the in-

genuity of his council could devise was thrown in the way of evidence. When the evidence of this Rajah Nund Coomar, as taken by the supreme council of Calcutta, was tendered it was rejected because it was not given in the council upon oath; though Mr. Hastings well knew that the Hindus never gave evidence upon oath, being contrary to their religion that it was never required,—that this very evidence had been received by the council as legal; and that he himself had always contended during his own government, that such evidence was legal. When a letter of Munny Begam was presented, proving the reception of her bribe by Mr. Hastings, that letter was not admitted because it was merely a copy, though an attested one; the original letter itself was however produced, and persons high in office in India at the time of the transaction, came forward to swear to the hand and seal as those of the Begam. And what then? the original letter itself was rejected because it made part of the evidence before the council, which had been rejected before on other grounds!

Such was the manner in which these and the other great charges against this celebrated Governor, which we have noticed in a former chapter, were met. Every piece of decisive evidence against him was resisted by every possible means: so that had he been the most innocent man alive, the only conviction that could remain on the mind of the public must have been that of his guilt. He had neither acted like an innocent, high-minded man, to whom the imputation of guilt is intolerable, himself in India, nor had his advocates in England been

instructed to do so. Evidence on every charge, of the most inclusive nature was offered, and resolutely rejected; and spite of all the endeavours to clear the memory of Warren Hastings of cruelty and corruption, the very conduct of himself and his counsel on the trial must stamp the accusing verdict indelibly on his name.

But his individual conduct is here of no further concern than to shew what must have been the contagion of his example, and what the license given by the House of Peers, by the rejection of evidence in such a case, to all future adventurers in India. Well, might Burke exclaim, "That it held out to all future Governors of Bengal the most certain and unbounded impunity. Peculation in India would be no longer practised, as it used to be, with caution and with secrecy. It would in future stalk abroad at noon-day, and act without disguise; because, after such a decision as has just been made by their Lordships, there was no possibility of bringing into a court the proofs of peculation." And indeed every misery which the combined evils of war, official plunder and remorseless exaction could heap upon the unhappy natives, seems to have reigned triumphant through the British provinces and dependencies of India at this period. The destructive contests with Haider Ali, the ravages of the English and their ally, the Nabab of Arcot in Tanjore and the Marawars, were necessarily productive of extreme ruin and misery. During Mr. Hastings' Government the duanne, or management of the revenues was assumed in Bengal by the English. Re-

forms both in the mode of collecting the taxes and in the administration of justice were attempted. The lands were offered on leases of five years, and those leases put up to auction to the best bidders. The British Parliament in 1773 appoints a supreme court of judicature in which English Judges administered English law. But as the great end aimed at was not the relief of the people, but the increase of the amount of taxation these changes, were only disastrous to the natives. Native officers were in many cases removed and the native ryots only the more oppressed. Every change in fact secured to be tried except the simple and satisfactory one of reducing the exactions and cultivating the blessing of peace. Ten years after these changes had been introduced and had been all this time inflicting unspeakable calamities on the people Mr. Dundas moved inquiry into Indian affairs and pronounced the most severe censures on both the Indian Presidencies and the Court of Directors. He accused the Presidencies and that most justly of plunging the nation into wars for the sake of conquest of contemning and violating treaties and plundering and oppressing the people of India. The Directors he charged with blaming the misconduct of their servants only when it was unattended with profit and exercising a very constant forbearance as often as it was productive of gain or territory.

Of the effects of his own military and financial changes Mr. Hastings had a good specimen in his journey through the province of Benares in 1784. This was only three years after he had committed the

atrocities in this province, related in a former chapter and driven the Rajah from his throne; and these are his own words, in a letter to the Council dated Lucknow, April, 1784:—"From the confines of Buxar to Benares I was followed and fatigued by the clamours of the discontented inhabitants. The distresses which were produced by the long continued drought unavoidably tended to heighten the general discontent: yet I have reason to fear that the cause principally existed in a defective, if not a corrupt and oppressive administration. From Buxar to the opposite boundary I have seen nothing but traces of complete devastation in every village. And what had occasioned those devastations? The wars and the determined resolve introduced by Mr. Hastings himself, to have the very uttermost amount that could be wrung from the people.

For the sort of persons to whom Mr. Hastings was in the habit of farming out the revenues of the provinces, and the motives for which they were appointed, we must refer to particulars which came out on his trial respecting such men as Kolleram, Govind Singh, and Deby Singh; but nothing can give a more lively idea of the horrid treatment which awaited the poor natives under such monsters as these collectors, than the statements then made of the practices of the last mentioned person, Deby or Devi Singh. This man was declared to have been placed on his post for corrupt ends. He was a man of the most infamous character; yet that did not prevent Mr. Hastings placing him in such a responsible office, though he himself declared on the

trial that he "so well knew the character and abilities of Rajah Deby Singh that he could easily conceive it was in his power both to commit great enormities and to conceal the real grounds of them from the British collectors in the District"—Well, notwithstanding this opinion, the Rajah offered a very convenient sum of money, four lacs of rupees—upwards of 40000-*l*.—and he was appointed renter of the District of Dinagpore. Complaints of his cruelties were not long in arriving at Calcutta. Mr. Patterson a gentleman in the Company's service, was sent as a commissioner to inquire into the charges against him; and the account of them as given by Mr. Patterson, is thus quoted by Mills from "The History of the trial of Warren Hastings Esq."

"The poor ryots or husbandmen were treated in a manner that could never gain belief if it was not attested by the records of the company and Mr. Burke thought it necessary to apologize to their Lordships for the horrid relation with which he would be obliged to harrow their feelings. The worthy commissioner Patterson, who had authenticated the particulars of this relation, had wished, that for the credit of human nature, he might have drawn a veil over them; but as he had been sent to inquire into them he must in the discharge of his duty state those particulars, however shocking they were to his feelings. The cattle and corn of the husbandmen were sold for a third of their value, and their huts reduced to ashes! The unfortunate owners were obliged to borrow from usurers, that they might discharge their bonds, which had unjustly and

illegally been extorted from them while they were in confinement and such was the determination of the infernal fiend Devi Singh to have these bonds discharged, that the wretched husbandmen were obliged to borrow money not at twenty, or thirty, or forty, or fifty, but at *six hundred* per cent to satisfy him !

Those who could not raise the money were most cruelly tortured. Cords were drawn tight round their fingers, till the flesh of the four on each hand was actually incorporated, and became one solid mass. The fingers were then separated again by wedges of iron and wood driven in between them ! Others were tied, two and two, by the feet, and thrown across a wooden bar, upon which they hung with their feet uppermost. They were then beat on the soles of the feet till the toenails dropped off ! They were afterwards beat about the head till the blood gushed out at the mouth, nose, and ears. They were also flogged upon the naked body with bamboo canes, and prickly bushes, and above all, with some poisonous weeds, which were of a caustic nature, and burnt at every touch. The cruelty of the monster who had ordered all this, had contrived how to tear the mind as well as the body. He frequently had a father and a son tied naked to one another by the feet and arms, and then flogged till the skin was torn from the flesh ; and he had the devilish satisfaction to know, that every blow must hurt ; for if one escaped the son, his sensibility was wounded by the knowledge he had, that the blow had fallen upon his father. The same,

torture was felt by the father, when he knew that every blow that missed him had fallen upon his son.

"The treatment of the females could not be described. Dragged from the inmost recesses of their houses, which the religion of the country had made so many sanctuaries, they were exposed naked to public view. The virgins were carried to the court of justice, where they might naturally have looked for protection, but they now looked for it in vain; for in the face of the ministers of justice, in the face of the spectators, in the face of the sun, those tender and modest virgins were brutally violated. The only difference between their treatment and that of their mothers was, that the former were dishonoured in the face of day, the latter in the gloomy recesses of their dungeon. Other females had the nipples of their breasts put in a cleft bamboo, and torn off." What follows is too shocking and indecent to transcribe! It is almost impossible, in reading of these frightful and savage enormities, to believe that we are reading of a country under the British Government, and that these unmanly deeds were perpetrated by British agents, and for the purpose of extorting the British revenues. Thus were these innocent and unhappy people treated, because Warren Hastings wanted money, and sold them to a wretch, whom he knew to be a wretch for a bribe; thus were they treated because Devi Singh had paid his four lacs of rupees, and must wring them again out of the miserable ryots, though it were with their very life's blood and with fire and torture before unheard of even in the

long and black catalogue of human crimes. And it should never be forgotten, that though Mr. Burke pledged himself, if permitted, under the most awful imprecations, to prove every word of this barbarous recital, such permission was stoutly refused; and that, moreover, the evidence of the commissioner Patterson stands in the company's own records. But it was not merely the commission of these outrages which the poor inhabitants had to endure. The English courts of justice, which should have protected them, became an additional means of torture and ruin. The writs of the supreme court were issued at the suit of individuals against the zemindars of the country in ordinary actions of debt. They were dragged from their families and affairs, with the frequent certainty of leaving them to disorder and ruin, any distance, even as great as five hundred miles, to give bail at Calcutta, a thing, which, if they were strangers, and the sum more than trifling it was next to impossible they should have in their power. In default of this, they were consigned to prison for all the many months which the delay of English judicature might interpose between this calamitous stage and the termination of the suit. Upon the affidavit, into the truth of which no inquiry was made, upon the unquestioned affidavit of any person whatsoever—a person of credibility, or directly the reverse, no difference—the natives were seized, carried to Calcutta, and consigned to prison, where, even when it was afterwards determined that they were not within the jurisdiction of the court, and, of course, that they had been unjustly persecuted,

they were liable to lie for several months, and whence they were dismissed totally without compensation. Instances occurred, in which defendants were brought from a distance to the presidency, and when they declared their intention of pleading, that is, objecting to the jurisdiction of the court, the prosecution was dropped; but was again renewed; the defendant brought down to Calcutta, and again upon his offering to plead, the prosecution was dropped. The very act of being seized, was in India, the deepest disgrace, and so degraded a man of any rank that, under the Mahomedan Government it never was attempted but in cases of the utmost delinquency (Mills. ii 560-2.)

In merely reading these cases of the proud man's contumely, the oppressors wrong, it is difficult to repress the burning indignation of one's spirit. What shame, what disgrace, that under the laws of England, and in a country to which we owe so much wealth and power, such a system of reckless and desperate injustice should for a long series of years have been practising! But if it be difficult to read of it without curses and imprecations, what must it have been to bear? How must the wretched, hopeless, harassed, persecuted, and outraged people have called on Brahma for that tenth Avtar which should sweep their invincible, their iron-handed and iron-hearted oppressors, as a swarm of locusts from their fair land! Let any one imagine what must be the state of confusion when the zamindars, or higher collectors of the revenues were thus plagued in the sphere of their arduous duties, and called out of it,

to the distant capital. When they were degraded in the eyes, and removed from the presence of the ryots, what must have been the natural consequence, but neglect and license on the part of the ryot, only too happy to obtain a little temporary ease? But the ryots themselves did not escape, as we have already seen. Such, however, continued this dismal state of things to the very end of the century. Lord Cornwallis complained in 1790, "that excepting the class of shroffs and banyas, who reside almost entirely in great towns, the inhabitants of these provinces were hastily advancing to a general state of poverty and wretchedness." Lord Cornwallis projected his plans, and in 1802, Sir Henry Strachey in answer to interrogatories sent to the Indian judges drew a gloomy picture of the results of all the schemes of finance and judicature that had been adopted. He represented that the zemindars, by the sale of their lands, in default of the payment of their stipulated revenue were almost universally destroyed, or were reduced to the condition of the lowest ryots. That, (in one year 1796) nearly one tenth of all the lands in Bengal Behar and Orissa, had been advertised for sale. That in two years alone, of the trial of the English courts, accumulated causes threatened to arrest the course of justice : in one single district of Bardwan more than 80,000 suits were before the judge; and that no candidate for justice could expect it in the course of an ordinary life. The great man formerly," said Sir Henry, "were the Musalman rulers, whose places, we have taken and the Hindu

zimandars. These two classes are now ruined and destroyed." He adds, "exaction of revenue is now, I presume, and, perhaps, always was, the most prevailing crime throughout the country; and I know not how it is that extortioners appear to us in any other light than that of the worst and most pernicious species of robbers." He tells us that the lands of the Marbattas in the neighbourhood of his district, Midnapore, were more prosperous than ours, though they were without regular courts of justice or police. "Where," says he "no battles are fought, the ryots remain unmolested by military exactions, and the zemindars are seldom changed, the country was in high cultivation and the population frequently superior to our own."

Such was the condition and treatment of the natives of Hindostan, at the commencement of the present century. In another chapter on our policy and conduct in this vast and important region—it remains only to take a rapid glance at the effect of these two centuries of despotism upon these subjected millions and to inquire what we have since been doing towards a better state of things,—more auspicious to them, and honorable to ourselves.

THE ENGLISH IN INDIA CONTINUED

We are accustomed to Govern India—a country which God never gave us, by means which God will never justify.

Lord Erskine speech on Stockdale's Trial.

We have traced something of the misery which a long course of avarice and despotism has inflicted on the natives of India, but we have not taken into the account its moral effect upon them. Generation after generation of Englishmen flocked over to Hindostan, to gather a harvest of wealth and to return and enjoy at home. Generation after generation of Indians arose to create this wealth for their temporary visitors, and to sink deeper and deeper themselves into poverty. Happy had it been for them, had poverty and physical wretchedness come alone. But the inevitable concomitant of slavery and destitution appeared with them and to every succeeding generation in a more appalling form—demoralization, vast as their multitude and dreadful as their condition. They were not more unhappy than they were degraded in spirit and debased in feeling. Ages of virtual though not nominal slavery, beneath Mohamedan and Christian masters had necessarily done their usual work on the Hindus.

They had long ceased to be the gentle, the pure minded, the merciful Hindus. They had become cruel, thievish, murderous, licentious as well as blindly superstitious. They had seen no religious purity, no moral integrity practised—how were they to become pure and honest? They had felt only cruelty and injustice how were they to be anything but cruel and unjust? They had seen from age to age, from day to day, from hour to hour, every sacred tie of blood or honour, every moral obligation, every great and eternal principle of human action violated around them—how were they to reverence such things? How were they to regard them but as solemn and unprofitable mockeries? They were accordingly corrupted into a mean, lying, depraved, and perfidious generation—could the abject tools of a money-scraping race of conquerors be anything else?—was it probable? was it possible? Philosophers and poetical minds, when such, now and then, reached India, were astonished to find, instead of those delicate and spiritual children of Burmah, of whom they had read such delightful accounts—a people so sordid, and in many instances so savage and cruel. They had not calculated, as they might have done, the certain consequences of long years of slavery's most fatal inflictions. What an eternal debt of generous and Christian retribution do we owe India for all this what, indeed, are the pains we have occasioned, the poverty we have created, the evils of all kinds that we have perpetrated, to the moral degradations we have induced, and the gross darkness, gross

superstition, the gross sensuality we have thus, in fact, fostered and perpetuated? Had we appeared in India as Christians instead of conquerors; as just merchants instead of subtle plotters, shunning the name of tyrants while we arrived at the most absolute tyranny; had we been as conspicuous for our diffusion of knowledge as for our keen, ceaseless, and insatiable gathering of coin; long ago that work would have been done which is but now beginning and our power would have acquired the most profound stability in the affections and the knowledge of the people.

At the period of which I have been speaking—the end of the last and the opening of the present century, the character of the Hindoos, as drawn by eye witnesses of the highest authority, was most deplorable. Even Sir William Jones, than whom there never lived a man more enthusiastic in his admiration of the Hindoo literature and antiquities, and none more ready to see all that concerned this people in sunny hues—even he, when he had had time to observe their character, was compelled to express his surprise and disappointment. He speaks of their cruelties with abhorrence: in his charge to the grand jury at Calcutta, June 10th, 1787, he observed, “perjury seems to be committed by the meanest, and encouraged by some of the better sort of the Hindoos and Musalmans with as little remorse as if it were a proof of ingenuity, or even of merit” that he had “no doubt that affidavits of any imaginary fact might be purchased in the markets of Calcutta as readily as any other article—and that, could the

most binding form of religious obligation be hit upon, there would be found few consciences to bind."

All the travellers and historians of the time, Orme Buchanan, Forster, Forbes, Scott Waring, etc, unite in bearing testimony to their grossness, filth, and disregard of their words; their treachery, cowardice, and thievishness; their avarice, equal to that of the whites, and their cunning and duplicity more than European; their foul language and quarrelsome habits—all the features of a people depraved by hereditary oppression and moral neglect. Their horrid and barbarous superstitions, by which thousands of victims are destroyed every year, are now familiar to all Europe. Every particular of these evil lineaments of character were most strikingly attested by the Indian judges, in their answers to the circular of interrogatories put to them in 1801, all ready alluded to. They all coincided in describing the general moral character of the inhabitants as at the lowest pitch of infamy; that very few exceptions to that character were to be found; that there was no species of fraud or villany that the higher classes, would not be guilty of; and that, in the lower classes were to be added, murder, robbery, adultery, perjury, etc., on the slightest occasion. One of them the magistrate of Juanpore, added, "I have observed among the inhabitants of this country, some possessed of abilities, qualified to rise to eminence in other countries, *but a moral virtuous man I have never met amongst them*

Mr. Grant described the Bengalees as depraved and dishonest to a degree to which Europe could furnish no parallel, that they were, cunning

servile, intriguing, false, and hypocritically obsequious; that they, however, indemnified themselves for their passiveness to their superiors by their tyranny, cruelty, and violence to those in their power." Amongst themselves he says, "discord, hatred, abuse, slanders, injuries, complaints, and litigations prevail to a surprising degree.

No stranger can sit down among them without being struck with the temper of malevolent contention and animosity as a prominent feature in the character of the society. It is seen in every village: the inhabitants live amongst each other in a sort of repulsive state. Nay, it enters into almost every family: seldom is there a household without its internal divisions and lasting enmities, and most commonly, too, on the score of interest. The women, too, partake of this spirit of discord. Held in slavish subjection by the men, they rise in furious passions against each other, which vent themselves in such loud virulent, and indecent railings, as are hardly to be heard in any other part of the world..... Benevolence has been represented as a leading principle in the minds of the Hindoos; but those who make this assertion know little of their character. Though a Hindoo would shrink with horror from the idea of directly slaying a cow, which is a sacred animal amongst them, yet he who drives one in his cart, galled and excoriated as she is by the yoke, beats her unmercifully from hour to hour without any care or consideration of the consequence" Mr. Fraser Tytler, Lord Teignmouth, Sir James Mackintosh, and others only expand the dark features of this melanco-

ly picture ; we need not therefore dwell largely upon it. The French missionary, the Abbe Dubois and Mr. Ward, the English one, bear a like testimony. The latter, on the subject of Hindoo humanity, asks—
 “are these men and women, too, who drag their dying relations to the banks of rivers, at all seasons, day and night, and expose them to the heat and cold in the last agonies of death, without remorse ; who assist men to commit self-murder, encouraging them to swing with hooks in their backs to pierce their tongues and sides—to cast themselves on naked knives or bury themselves alive—throw themselves in rivers, from precipices, and under the cars of their idol,—who murder their own children—burying them alive, throwing them to the alligators, or hanging them up alive in trees for the ants and crows, before their own doors, or by sacrificing them to the Ganges ;—who burn alive, amidst savage shouts, the heart broken widow, by the hands of their own son, and with the corpse of a deceased father ; —who every year butcher thousands of animals, at the call of superstition, covering themselves with blood, consigning their carcasses to the dogs, and carrying their heads in triumph through the streets? are these the benignant Hindoos.”

It may be said that these cruelties are the natural growth of their superstitions. True ; but, up to the period in question, who had endeavoured to correct, or who cared for their superstitions so that they paid their taxes ? To this hour, or, at least, till but yesterday, many of these bloody superstitions have had the actual sanction of the British countenance !

To this hour the dreadful indications of their cruel and treacherous character, apart from their superstitions, from time to time affright Europe. We have latterly heard much of the horrible deeds of the thugs and phasingars. Where such dreadful associations and habits are prevalent to the extent described, there must be a most monstrous corruption of morals, shocking neglect of the people, and consequent annihilation of every thing like social security and civilization. In what, indeed, does the practice and temper of the Thugs differ from those of the decoits, who abounded at the period in question? These were gangs of robbers who associated for their purposes, and practised by subtle subterfuge or open violence, as best suited the occasion. They went in troops, and made a common assault on houses and property, or dispersed themselves under various disguises, to inveigle their victims into their power. Mr. Dowdeswell, in a report to Government in 1809, says, "robbery, rape, and murder itself are not the worst figures in this horrid and disgusting picture. An expedient of common occurrence with the Decoits, merely to induce a confession of property supposed to be concealed, is to burn the proprietor with straws or torches until he discloses the property or perishes in the flames." He mentions one man who was convicted of having committed 15 murders in 19 days, and adds that, "volumes might be filled with the atrocities of the Decoits, every line of which would make the blood run cold with horror". He does, indeed, give some details of them of the most amazing and narrowing description.

Sir Henry Strachey in his report already quoted, says, " the crime of decoity, in the district of Calcuttra, has, I believe, greatly increased since the British administration of justice. The number of convicts confined at the six stations of this Division (independent of Zillah 24 pergunnaahs) is about 4000. Of them *probably nine tenths are decoits*. Beside these some hundreds of late years have been transported. The number of persons convicted of decoity, however great it may appear, is certainly small in proportion to those who are guilty of the crime. At Midnapore I find by the reports of the Police darogars, that in the year 1802, a period of peace and tranquillity, they sent intelligence of no less than 93 robberies, most of them, as usual, committed by large gangs. With respect to 51 of these robberies, not a man was taken, and for the remaining 42, very few, frequently only one or two in each gang." Other judges describe the extent to which decoity existed, as being much vaster than was generally known, and calculated to excite the most general terror throughout the country.

This is an awful picture of a people approaching to 100 millions, and of a great and splendid country, which has been for the most part in our hands for more than a century. It only remains now to inquire what has been done since the opening of the 19th century for the instruction and general amelioration of the condition of this vast multitude of human beings, and thereby for our own justification as a Christian nation. Warren Hastings said most truly, that throwing aside all pretences of any other kind

that many were disposed to set up, the simple truth was that "By the sword India had been acquired, and by the sword it must be maintained." If the forcible conquest of a country be, therefore, a crime against the rights of nations and the principles of religion what retribution can we make for our national offences, except by employing our power to make the subjected people happy and virtuous? But if we do not even hold conquest to be a crime, or war to be unchristian, where is the man that will not deem that we have assumed an awful responsibility on the plainest principles of the gospel, by taking into our hands the fate of so many millions of human creatures, thus degraded, thus ignorant and unhappy? It is impossible either to "do justice, to love mercy, or to walk humbly before God," without as zealously seeking the social and eternal benefit of so great a people, as we have sought, and still seek, our own advantage, in the possession of their wealth. Over this important subject I am unfortunately bound to pass, by my circumscribed limits, in a hasty manner. The subject would require a volume. It is with pleasure, however, that we can point to certain great features in the modern history of improvement in India. It is with pleasure that we can say that some of the most barbarous rites of the Hindu superstitions have been removed. That infanticide, and the burning of widows have been abolished by the British influence; and that though the horrible immolations of Juggernaut are not terminated, they are no longer so unblushingly sanctioned, and even encouraged by British interference. These

are great steps in the right path. To Colonel Walker, and Mr. Duncan, the governor of Bombay, immortal thanks and honour are due, for first leading the way in this track of great reforms, by at once discouraging, dissuading from, and finally abolishing infanticide in Guzeart. One of the most beneficial acts of the Marquis Wellesley's government, was to put this horrible custom down in Saugur. How little anything however, but the extraction of revenue had throughout all the course of our dominion in India been regarded till the present century, the Christian Researches of Mr. Buchanan made manifest. The publication of that book, coming as it did from a gentleman most friendly to our authorities there, was the commencement of a new era in our Indian history. It at once turned, by the strangeness of its details, the eyes of all the religious world on our Indian territories, and excited a feeling which more than any other cause has led to the changes which have hitherto been effected. At that period (1806) in making a tour through the peninsula of Indostan he discovered that everything like attention to the moral or religious condition of either natives or colonists was totally neglected. That all the atrocious superstitions of the Hindus were not merely tolerated, but even sanctioned, and some of them patronized by our government. That though there were above twenty English regiments in India at that time, *not one of them had a chaplain*, (P. 80). That in Ceylon, where the Dutch had once 32 Protestant churches, we had then but two English clergymen in the whole island, (P. 93) that there were in it by

computation five lacs of natives professing Christianity; who, however, "had not one complete copy of the scriptures in the vernacular tongue, and consequently they were fast receding into paganism, (P. 95). That the very English were more notorious for their infidelity than for any thing else, and by their presence did infinite evil to the natives. That, in that very year, when the Governor of Bombay announced to the Supreme Government at Calcutta, his determination to attempt to exterminate infanticide from Guzerat—a practice, be it remembered, which in that province alone *destroyed annually 3000 children!* *this cool commercial body warned him, not "even for the *speculative* success of that benevolent project, to hazard the *essential interests* of the state! (p. 52) That all the horrors of burning widows were perpetrated to the amount of from seven hundred to *one thousand* of such diabolical scenes annually. That the disgusting and gory worship of Juggernaut was not merel. practiced, but was actually lic-n-ed and patronized by the English Government. That very year it had imposed a tax on all pilgrims going to the temples in Orissa and Bengal, had appointed British officers, British gentlemen to super-intend the management of this hideous worship and the receipt of its proceeds. That the internal rites of the temple consisted in one loathsome scene of prostitution, hired bands of women being kept for the purpose; its outward rites the crushing of human victims under the car of the idol.

* It is said that infanticide, spite of the legal prohibition, is still privately perpetrated to a great extent in Cutch and Guzerat.

Thus the Indian Government had in fact, instead of discouraging such practices in the natives, taken up the trade of public murderers, and keepers of houses of ill fame, and that under the sacred name of religious tolerance! A more awful state of things it is impossible to conceive; nor one which more forcibly demonstrates what the whole of this history proclaims, that there is no state of crime, corruption, or villany, which by being familiarised to them, and coming to regard them as customary, educated men, and men of originally good hearts and pure consciences, will not eventually practice with composure, and even defend as right. What defences have we not heard in England of these very practices? It was not till recently that public opinion was able to put down the immolation of widows,* nor till this very moment that the Indian Government has been shamed out of trading in murder and prostitution in the temples of Juggernaut. Thus, for more than thirty years has this infamous trade at Juggernaut been persisted in, from the startling exposure of it by Buchanan, and in the face of all the abhorrence, and remonstrances of England—for more than a century and a half it has been tolerated. The plea on which it has been defended is that of delicacy towards the *opinions* of the natives. That delicacy thus delicately extended where money was to be made, has not in a single case been practised for a single instant where our interest prompted a different conduct. We have seized on the lands of the natives

* Nominally, in 1829; but not actually till considerably later

on their revenues ; degraded their persons by the lash, or put them to death without any scruple. But this plea has been so strongly rebutted by one well acquainted with India, in the Oriental herald, that b-f re quitting this subject it will be well to quote it here " The assumption that our empire is an empire of opinion in India, and that it would be endangered by restraining the bloody and abominable rites of the natives, is as false as the inference is unwarranted. Our empire is *not* an empire of opinion, it is not even an empire of law it has been acquired ; it is still governed ; and can only be retained, unless the whole system of its Government is altered, by the direct influence of force. No portion of the country has been voluntarily ceded, from the love borne to us by the original possessors. We were first permitted to land on the sea coast to sell our wares, as humble and solicitous traders ; till by degrees, sometimes by force and sometimes by fraud, we have possessed ourselves of an extent of territory containing nearly a hundred millions of human beings. We have put down the ancient sovereigns of the land, we have stripped the nobles of all their power ; and by continual drains on the industry and the resources of the people, we take from them all their surplus and disposable wealth. There is not a single province of that country that we have ever acquired but by the direct influence which our strength and commanding influence could enforce, or by the direct agency of war like oppressions and superior skill in arms.

There is not a spot throughout the whole of this

wast region whereon we rule by any other medium than that by which we first gained our footing there—simple force. There is not a district in which the natives would not gladly see our places as rulers supplied by men of their own nation, faith, and manners, so that they might have a share in their own affairs; nor is there an individual, cut of all the millions subject to our rule in Asia, whose opinion is ever asked as to the policy or impolicy of any law or regulation about to be made by our Government, however it may press the interests of those subject by its operation. It is a delusion which can never be too frequently exposed, to believe that our empire in India is an empire of opinion, or to imagine that we have any security for our possession of that country, except the superiority of our means for maintaining the dominion of force.”
(vol. ii p. 174.)

THE ENGLISH IN INDIA, — CONCLUDED.

The preceeding chapter is an awful subject of contemplation for a Christian nation. An empire over one hundred millions acquired by force, and held by force for the appropriation of their revenues! Even this dominion of force is a fragile tenure. We even now watch the approaches of the gigantic power of Russia towards these regions with jealousy and alarm; and it is evident that at once security to ourselves, and atonement to the natives, are only to be found in the amelioration of their condition: in educating and Christianizing them, and in amalgamising them with British interests and British blood as much as possible. The throwing open of these vast regions, by the abolition of the Company's charter of trade, to the enterprise and residence of our countrymen, now offers us ample means of moral retribution: and it is with peculiar interest that we now turn to every symptom of a better state of things.

A new impulse is given to both commerce and agriculture. The march of improvement in the cultivation and manufacture of various productions is begun. The growth of wheat is encouraged, and even large quantities of fine flour imported thence into England. The indigo trade has become amazing by the improvement in the manipulation of that article. Sugar, coffee, opium, cotton, spices, rice, every product of this rich and varied region, will all

find a greater demand, and consequently a greater perfection from culture, under these circumstances. There is, in fact, no spices of vegetable production which, in this glorious country, offering in one part or another the temperature of every known climate, may not be introduced. Such is the fertility of the land under good management, that the natives often now make 26 £. per acre of their produce. The potato is becoming as much esteemed there as it has long been in Europe and America. Tea is likely to become one of its most important articles of native growth. Our missionaries of a various denominations—episcopians, catholics, baptists, methodists, moravians, etc., are zealously labouring to spread knowledge and Christianity: and there is nothing, according to the Christian brahmin, Rammohan Roy, which the Indian people so much desire as an English education. Let that be given, and the fetters of caste must be broken at once. The press, since the great struggle in which Mr. Buckingham was driven from India for attempting its freedom, has acquired a great degree of freedom. The natives are admitted to sit on petty juries: slavery is abolished, and last, and best, education is now extensively and zealously promoted. The company was bound by the terms of its charter in 1813 to devote 10,000 £ annually to educating natives in the English language and English knowledge, which, though but a trifling sum compared with the vast population, aided by various private schools, must have produced very beneficial effects. Bishop Haber states that on his arrival in Bengal he found that there were fifty thousand

scholars, chiefly under the care of Protestant missionaries. These are the means which must eventually make British rule that blessing which it ought to have been long ago. These are the means by which we may at one, and more than at one, for all our crimes and our selfishness in India. But let us remember that we are after the despotism of two centuries, after oceans of blood shed by us, and oceans of wealth drained by us from India, and after that blind and callous system of exaction and European exclusion which has perpetuated all the ignorance and all the atrocities of Hindu superstitions, and laid the burthen of them on our own shoulders—but at this moment on the mere threshold of this better career. Let us remember that still, at this hour, Indostan is, in fact the, *Ireland of the East*? It is a country pouring out wealth upon us while it is swarming with a population of one hundred millions in the lowest state of poverty and wretchedness. It swarms with robbers and assassins of the most dreadful description and it is impossible that it should be otherwise. It is said to be happy and contented under our rule; but such a happiness as its boldest advocates occasionally give us a glimpse of, may God soon remove from that oppressed country. Indeed, such are the features of it, even as drawn by its enlogists, as make us wonder that such wretchedness should exist under English sway. Our travellers describe the mass of the labouring people as stunted in stature, especially the women; as half famished, and with hardly a rag to their backs. Mr Tucker, himself a director, and Deputy Chairman of the Court of Directors, asks,

"Whether it be possible for them to believe that a Government, which seems disposed to appropriate a vast territory as universal landlord, and to collect, not revenue, but rent, can have any other view than to extract from the people the utmost portion which they can pay ? and adds, that "if the deadly hand of the tax gatherer perpetually hover over the land, and threaten to grasp that which is not yet called into existence, its benumbing influence must be fatal, and the fruits of the earth will be stifled in the very germ."

Yet this is the constant system ; and the poor ryots who cultivate from six to twenty four acres, but generally of the smaller kind, requiring only one plough, which with other implements and a team of oxen, costs about 6 l. are compelled to form not such as they chose, but such as are allotted to them ; to pay from one half to two thirds of their gross produce. If they attempt to run away from it, they are brought back and flogged, and forced to work. If after all they can not pay their quota, Sir Thomas Munro tells you, "*it must be assessed upon the rest.*" That where a crop even is less than the seed, the peasantry should always be made to pay the full rent where they can. And that all complaints on the part of the ryot, should be listened to with very great caution." Is it any wonder that Indostan is, and always has been full of robbers ? Is this system not enough to make men run off, and do anything but work thus without hope ? But it is not merely the work : look at the task-masters set over them. "A very large proportion of the talliares," says Sir

Thomas Munro, "are themselves thieves; all the kawilgars are themselves robbers exempting them; and though they are now afraid to act openly, there is no doubt that many of them still secretly follow their former practices. Many potails and curnums also harbour thieves; so that no traveller can pass through the ceded districts without being robbed, who does not employ his own servants or those of the village to watch at night; and even this precaution is often ineffectual. Many offenders are taken, but great numbers also escape, for connivance must also be expected among the kawilgars and the tallhars, who are themselves thieves; and the inhabitants are often backward in giving information from the fear of *assassination*." Colonel Stewart in 1825, asserted in his "Considerations on the Policy of the Government of India," that "if we look for absolute and bodily injury produced by our misgovernment, he did not believe that all the cruelties practised *in the lifetime* of the worst tyrant that ever sat upon a throne, even amounted to the quantity of human suffering inflicted by the Decoits *in one year* in Bengal." The prevalence of Thugs and Phasingars does not augur much improvement in this respect yet; nor do recent travellers induce us to believe that the picture of popular misery given us about half a dozen years ago by the author of "Reflections on the Present state of British India," is yet become untrue.

"Hitherto the poverty of the cultivating classes, men who have both property and employment, has been alone considered; but the extreme misery to which the immense mass of the unemployed popu-

lation are reduced, would defy the most able pen adequately to describe, or the most fertile imagination to conceive. . . . On many occasions of ceremony in families of wealthy individuals, it is customary to distribute alms to the poor; sometimes four annas, about three-pence, and rarely more than eight annas each. When such an occurrence is made known, the poor assemble in astonishing numbers, and the roads are covered with them from twenty to fifty miles in every direction. On their approaching the place of gift, no notice is taken of them, though half famished, and almost unable to stand, till towards the evening, when they are called into an inclosed space, and huddled together for the night, in such crowds, that notwithstanding their being in the open air, it is surprising how they escape suffocation. When the individual who makes the donation perceives that all the applicants are in the inclosure, (by which process he guards against the possibility of any poor wretch receiving his bounty twice), he begins to dispense his alms either in the night, or on the following morning, by taking the poor people, one by one, from the place of their confinement and driving them off as soon as they have received their pittance. The number of people thus accumulated, generally amounts to from twenty to fifty thousand; and from the distance they travel, and the hardships they endure for so inconsiderable a bounty some idea may be formed of their destitute condition.

"In the interior of Bengal there is a class of inhabitants who live by catching fish in the ditches and rivulets; the men employing themselves during the

whole day, and the women travelling to the nearest city, often a distance of fifteen miles, to sell the produce. The rate at which these poor creatures perform their daily journey is almost incredible, and the sum realized is so small as scarcely to afford them the necessaries of life. In short, throughout the whole of the provinces the crowds of poor wretches who are destitute of the means of subsistence are beyond relief. On passing through the country, they are seen to pick the undigested grains of food from the dung of elephants, horses, and camels; and if they can procure a little salt, large parties of them sally into the fields at night, and devour the green blades of corn or rice the instant they are seen to shoot above the surface. Such, indeed, is their wretchedness that they envy the lot of the convicts working in chains upon the roads, and have been known to incur the danger of criminal prosecution, in order to secure themselves from starving by the allowance made to those who are condemned to hard labour."

Such is the condition of these native millions from whose country our countrymen, flocking over there, according to the celebrated simile of Burke "like birds of prey and of passage, to collect wealth have returned with most splendid fortunes to England." What is the avowed slavery of some half million of negroes in the West Indies, who have excited so much interest amongst us, to the virtual slavery of these *hundred millions* of Hindus in their own land? It is declared that these poor creatures are happy under our government,—but it should be

recollected that so it has been, and is, said of the negroes ; and it should be also recollected what Sir John Malcolm said, in 1824, in a debate at the India-house—himself a governor and a laudator of our system, that “even the instructed classes of natives have a hostile feeling towards us, which was not likely to decrease from the necessity they were under of concealing it. My attention,” he said, “has been during the last five-and-twenty years particularly directed to this dangerous species of secret war carried on against our authority, which is *always carried on* by numerous though unseen hands. The spirit is kept up by letters, by exaggerated reports, and by pretended prophecies. When the time appears favourable from the occurrence of misfortune to our arms, from rebellion in our provinces, or from mutiny in our troops, circular letters and proclamations are dispersed over the country with a celerity that is incredible. *Such documents are read with avidity.* Their contents are in most cases the same. The English are depicted as *usurpers* of low caste, and as tyrants, who have sought India only to degrade them, to rob them of their wealth, and subvert their usages and religion. The native soldiers are always appealed to, and the advice to them is in all instances I have met with, the same,—‘your European tyrants are few in number—*murder them!*’”

How far are these evils diminished since the last great political change in India—since the abolition of the Company’s charter, and they became, not the commercial monopolists, but the governors of India. Dr. Spry, of the Bengal Medical Staff, can answer

that in his "Modern India," published in 1837. The worthy doctor describes himself as a short time ago (1833) being on an expedition to reduce some insurrectionary Coles in the provinces of Benares and Dinapore. "Next morning," he says, "Feb. 9th, we went out in three parties to burn and destroy villages! Good fun, burning villages!" The mode of expression would lead one to suppose that the doctor extremely enjoyed "the good fun of burning villages;" but the general spirit of his work being sensible and humane, we are bound to suppose that his expressions and his notes of admiration are ironical, and meant to indicate the abhorrence such acts deserves; for he immediately tells us that these Coles seemed very inoffensive sort of people, and laid down their arms in large numbers the moment they were invited to do so.

Dr. Spry tells us that the Anglo-Indian government, in 1836, had come to the admirable resolution to make the English language the vernacular tongue throughout Indostan. That would be, in effect, to make it entirely an English land—to leaven it rapidly, and for ever, with the spirit, the laws, the literature, and the religion of England. It is impossible to make the English language the vernacular tongue without at the same time producing the most astonishing moral revolution whichever yet was witnessed on the earth. English ideas, English tastes, English literature and religion, must follow as a matter of course. It is curious, indeed, already to hear of the instructed natives of Indostan holding literary and philosophical meetings in English forms, debating

questions of morals and polite letters, and adducing the opinions of Milton, Shakspeare, Newton, Locke, etc. Dr. Spry states that the Committee of Public Instruction are about to establish schools for educating the natives in English, at Patnah, Dacca, Hazeeribagh, Gohawati, and other places ; and that the native princes in Nepaul, Manipur, Rajpootanah, the Punjab, etc. were receiving instruction in English, and desirous to promote it in their territories. This is most encouraging ; but Dr. Spry gives us other facts of a less agreeable nature. From these we learn that the ancient canker of India, excessive and unremitting exaction, is at this moment eating into the very vitals of the country as actively as ever. He says that " it is in the territories of the independent native chiefs and princes that great and useful works are found, and maintained. In our territories, the canals, bridges, reservoirs, wells, groves, temples, and caravansaries, the works of our predecessors, from revenues expressly appropriated to such undertakings, are going fast to decay, together with the feelings which originated them ; and unless a new and more enlightened policy shall be followed, of which the dawn may, perhaps, be distinguished, will soon leave not a trace behind. A persistence for a short time longer in our selfish administration will level the face of the country, as it has levelled the ranks of society, and leave a plain surface for wiser statesmen to act on.

" At present, the aspect of society presents no middle class, and the aspect of the country is losing all those great works of ornament and utility with

which we found it adorned. Great families are levelled, and lost in the crowd; and great cities have dwindled into farm villages. The work of destruction is still going on; and unless we act on new principles will proceed with desolating rapidity. How many thousand links by which the affections of the people are united to the soil, and to their government, are every year broken and destroyed by our selfishness and ignorance; and yet, if our views in the country, extended beyond the returns of a single harvest, beyond the march of a single detachment, or the journey of a single day, we could not be so blind to their utility and advantage." He adds: "By our revenue management we have shaken the entire confidence of the rural population, who now no longer lay out their little capital in village improvement, lest our revenue officers, at the expiration of their leases, should take advantage of their labours, and impose an additional rent. . . . With regard to Hindostan, those natives who are unfriendly to us *might with justice declare our conduct to be more allied to Vandalism than to civilization.* . . . Burke's severe rebuke still holds good,—that if the English were driven from India, they would leave behind them no memorial worthy of a great and enlightened nation; no monument of art, science, or beneficence; no vestige of their having occupied and ruled over the country, except such traces as the vulture and the tiger leave behind them."—pp. 10-18. He tells us that a municipal tax was imposed under pretence of improving and beautifying the towns, but that the improvements very soon stopped, while the tax is

still industriously collected. In the appendix to his first volume, we find detailed all the miseries of the ryots as we have just reviewed them; and he tells us that of this outraged class are *eleven-twelfths of the population!* and quotes the following sentence from "The Friend of India." "A proposal was some time since made, or rather a wish expressed, to domesticate the art of caricaturing in India. Here is a fine subject. The artist should first draw the lean and emaciated ryot, scratching the earth at the tail of a plough drawn by two half-starved, bare-ribbed bullocks. Upon his back he would place the more robust Seeputneedar, and upon his shoulders the Durputneedar; he, again, should sustain the well-fed Putneedar; and, seated upon his shoulders should be represented, to crown the scene, the big zemindar, that compound of milk, sugar, and clarified butter. . . . The poor ryot pays for all! He is drained by these middle-men; he is cheated by his banker out of twenty-four per cent. at least; and his condition is beyond description or imagination."

Dr. Spry attests the present continuance of those scenes of destitution and abject wretchedness which I have but a few pages back alluded to. He has seen the miserable creatures picking up the grains of corn from the soil of the roads. "I have seen," says he, hundreds of famishing poor, traversing the jungles of Bundelcund, searching for wild berries to satisfy the cravings of hunger. Many, worn down by exhaustion or disease, die by the road-side, while mothers, to preserve their offspring from starvation, sell or give them to any rich man they can meet!"

He himself, in 1834, was offered by such a mother her daughter of six years old for fourteen shillings !—vol. i. 297.

These are the scenes and transactions in our great Indian empire—that splendid empire which has poured out such floods of wealth into this country ; in which such princely presents of diamonds and gold have been heaped on our adventurers ; from the gleanings of which so many happy families in England* “live at home at ease,” and in the enjoyment of every earthly luxury and refinement. For every

* Even so recently as 1827 we find some tolerably regal instances of regal gifts to our Indian representatives. Lord and Lady Amherst on a tour in the provinces arrived at Agra. Lady Amherst received a visit from the wife of Hindoo Row and his ladies. They proceeded to invest Lady Amherst with the presents sent for her by the Byza Bhys. They put on her a turban richly adorned with the most costly diamonds, a superb diamond necklace, ear-rings anklets, bracelets, and amulets of the same, valued at 30,000*l.* sterling. A complete set of gold ornaments, and another of silver, was then presented. Miss Amherst was next presented with a pearl necklace, valued at 5,000*l.*, and other ornaments of equal beauty and costliness. Other ladies had splendid presents—the whole value of the gifts amounting to 50,000*l.* sterling !

In the evening came Lord Amherst's turn. On visiting the Row, his hat was carried out and brought back on a tray covered. The Row uncovered it, and placed it on his lordship's head, overlaid with the most splendid diamonds. His lordship was then invested with other jewels to the reputed amount of 20,000*l.* sterling. Presents

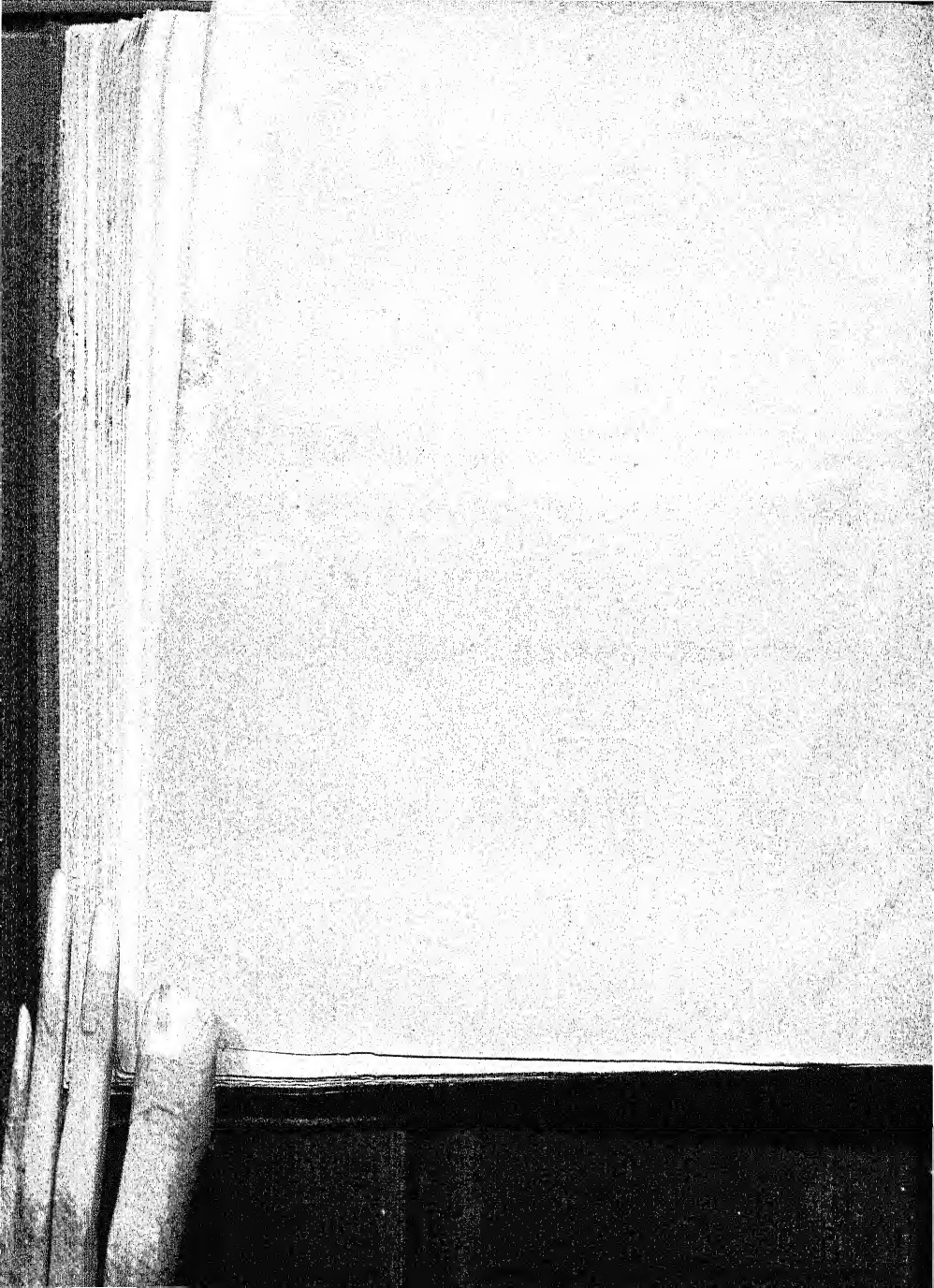
place built by returned Indian nabobs in England ; for every investment by fortunate adventurers in India stock ; for every cup of wine and delicious viand tasted by the families of Indian growth amongst us, how many of these Indians themselves are now picking berries in the wild jungles, sweltering at the thankless plough only to suffer fresh extortions, or snatching with the bony fingers of famine, the blated grains from the manure of the highways of their native country !

I wonder whether the happy and fortunate—made happy and fortunate by the wealth of India, ever think of these things ?—whether the idea ever comes across them in the luxurious carriage, or at the table crowded with the luxuries of all climates ?—whether they glance in a sudden imagination from the silken splendour of their own abodes, to the hot highways and the pestilential jungles of India, and see those naked, squatted, famishing, and neglected creatures, thronging from vast distances to the rich man's dole, or feeding on the more loathsome dole of the roads ? It is impossible that a more strange antithesis can be pointed out in human affairs. We turn from it with even a convulsive joy, to grasp at the prospects of education in that singular country. Let the people be educated, and they will

followed to the members of his suite. Lady Amherst took this opportunity of retiring to the tents of the Hindu ladies, *where presents were again given* ; and a bag of 1,000 rupees to her ladyship's female servants, and 500 rupees to her interpreters.

Oriental Herald, vol. xiv. p 444.

soon cease to permit oppression. Let the English engage themselves in educating them, and they will soon feel and the sympathies of nature awakened in their hearts towards these unhappy natives. In the meantime these are all the features of a country suffering under the evils of a long and grievous thralldom. They are the growth of ages, and are not to be removed but by a zealous and unwearied course of atoning justice. Spite of all flattering representations to the contrary, the British public should keep its eye fixed steadily on India, assuring itself that a debt of vast retribution is there due from us ; and that we have only to meet the desire now anxiously manifested by the natives for education, to enable us to expiate towards the children all the wrongs and degradations heaped for centuries on the father ; and to fix our name, our laws, our language and religion, as widely and beneficently there in the New World !



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